DIFFERENTIATION OF THE PEASANTRY IN BANGLADESH

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY WITH MICRO LEVEL DATA

By

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ABSTRACT

Most studies in the Third World conclude that the magnitude of poverty and inequality amongst the majority of the rural population has increased. This is particularly emphasised for Bangladesh. But scholars differ in explaining the causes of this depressing trend. One group would attribute it to the natural/demographic factors; while others insist that inequality and poverty are manifestations of certain socio-economic processes which cause the peasantry to disintegrate. The two divergent views strikingly resemble the famous debate on differentiation of the peasantry which took place in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th century between the Populists and Marxists.

The present study makes an attempt to apply the principal hypotheses of that debate in the context of two villages in Bangladesh. Data generated through a prolonged, indepth survey into demographic and socio-economic aspects of households of these two villages have been used to test the hypotheses.

The major findings of the study are as follows :

i) The hypothesis that it is family size which determines the relative wealth of any household does not always hold good.

ii) The 'social mobility' schema or the lack of class differential hypothesis does not always appear to be true.

iii) Clearly a pattern of differentiation between owners and non-owners of material elements of production, including land, has emerged in rural Bangladesh.

iv) The speed of this differentiation is higher in a village which has acquired some 'Green Revolution' technology.

v) The old relations of production and exchange are changing along with the differentiation and a process of dispossession of the poor and enlargement of the rich holdings are gaining momentum. However, this 'proletarianisation' is, as yet, 'partial'.

vi) The state has been actively negotiating on behalf of capital to subsume labour. The rich peasantry has clearly benefited from state intervention with respect to the peasantry. This has only accentuated the process of differentiation of the peasantry.

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CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES PAGE

TABLES PAGE

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LIST OF GRAPHS AND FIGURES

Bangladesh : Basic Features

1. Location and Area :

Located in the tropical zone with longitudinal bounds at 20.34°N and 26.38°N and latitudinal bounds at 88.01°E and 92.41°E.
Total land area is 143,998 km^2 (55,598 square miles) including rivers (the river areas encompass 9,065 km^2/3,500 square miles).
Largely a deltaic plain formed by the outlet of the Ganges (Padma) and Brahmaputra (Jamuna) Rivers into the Bay of Bengal (see Map at page -15).

2. Climate :

Tropical Monsoon with heavy rains in May-September.
Annual Rainfal : 1.4 to 5 metres.
Temperature : 22°c - 28°c.

3. Population :

Total Population : Around 90 million (1981)
Rate of Growth : 2.59%
Density : 1,566 persons per square mile.
Labour force as % of total population : 35.2%
Agricultural labour force as % of total labour force : 55.4% (1974 Census figures).
Rural Population : 91.22%
Urban Population : 8.78%

4. Structure of G.D.P:
(1979-80 estimates)

Sector	% Share
Agriculture	55.26
Manufacture	8.39
Trade, transport and other services	25.00
Construction, Power, Gas, Housing etc.	11.35
Total :	100.00

5. Per Capita Income/Land :

G.D.P Per Capita (1977) : US $ 91

Land Per Capita " .34 acre.

6. Currency :

1 taka = 100 poisha

1 US $ = about 20 taka (as of February 1982)

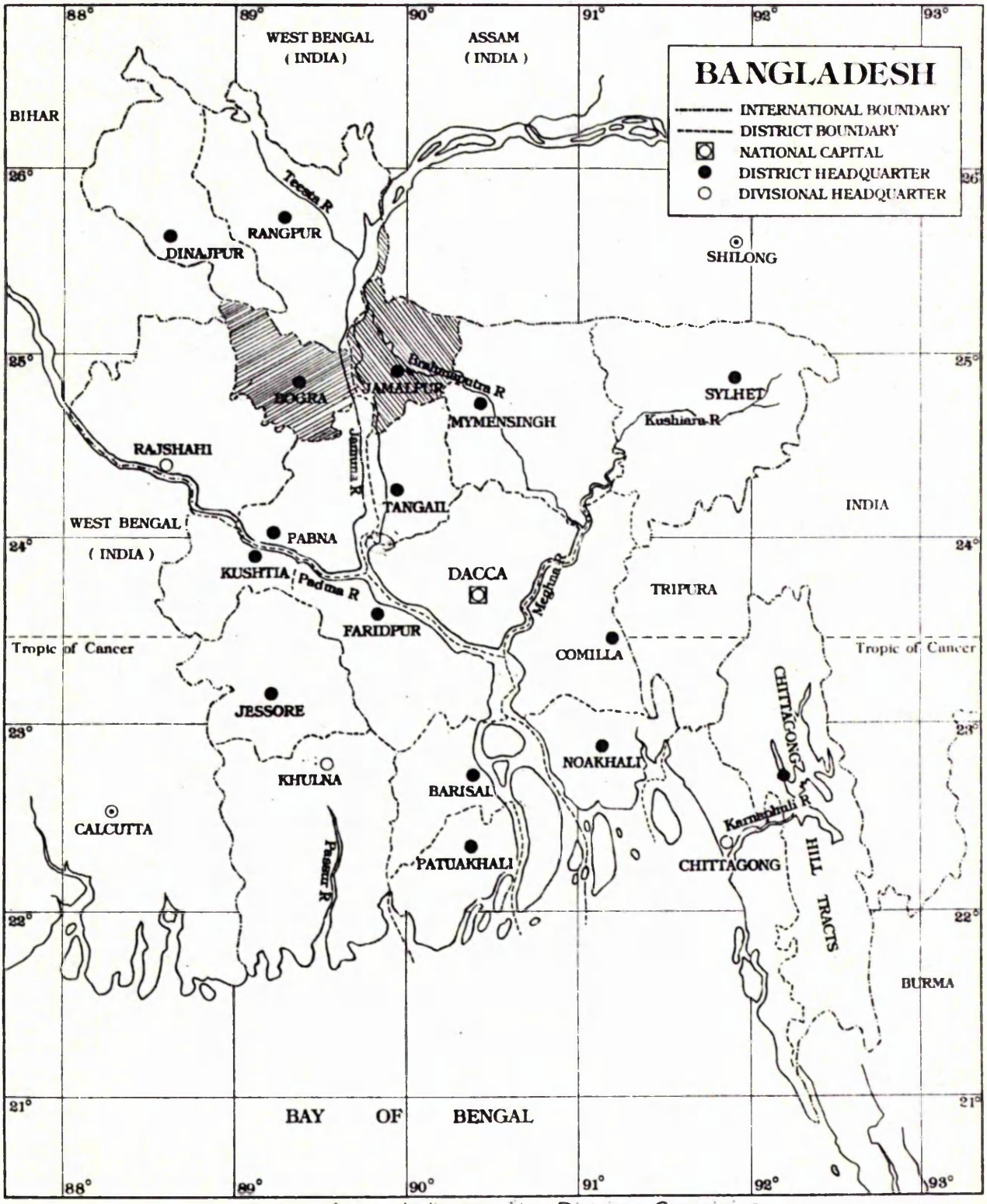
7. Measures :

1 maund = 40 seers = around 37 kilos = 1/27 ton.

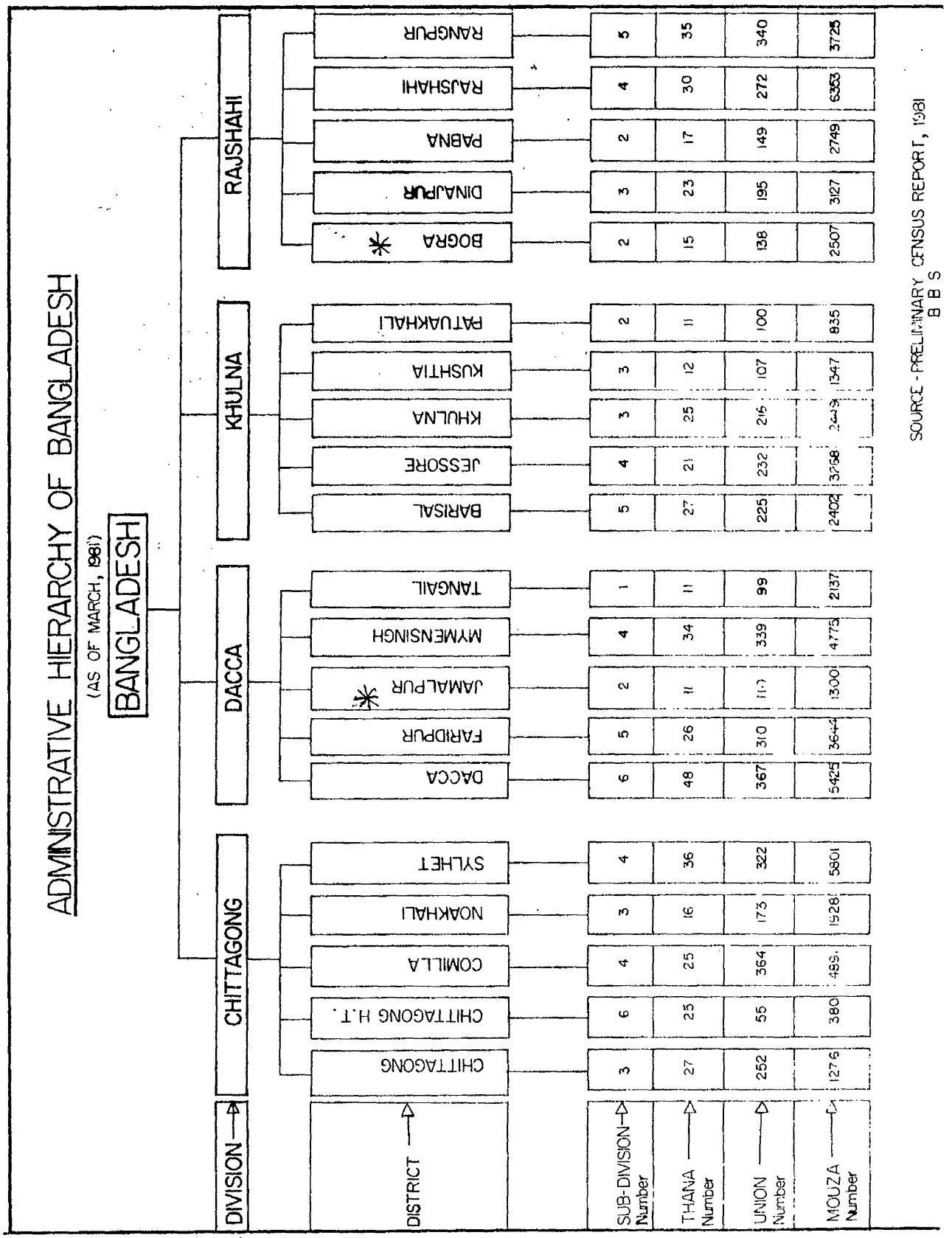
1 bigha = ⅓ acre = 0.13 hectares.

8. Administrative Divisions (as of March 1981) :

a) Divisions	:	4
b) Districts	:	21
c) Sub-divisions	:	71
d) Thanas	:	475
e) Unions	:	4,365
f) Mouzas	:	60,316
g) Village :		
i) Less than 50 households	:	20,163
ii) 50 or more households	:	65,485



Shaded Area Indicates the Districts Containing the study villages


ADMINISTRATIVE HIERARCHY OF BANGLADESH
(AS OF MARCH, 1981)
BANGLADESH
DIVISION
CHITTAGONG
DACCA
KHULNA
RAJSHAHI
DISTRICT
CHITTAGONG
CHITTAGONG H.T.
COMILLA
NOAKHALI
SYLHET
DACCA
FARIDPUR
JAMALPUR
MYMENSINGH
TANGAIL
BARISAL
JESSORE
KHULNA
KUSHTIA
PATUAKHALI
BOGRA
DINAJPUR
PABNA
RAJSHAHI
RANGPUR
SUB-DIVISION Number
THANA Number
UNION Number
MOUZA Number
SOURCE - PRELIMINARY CENSUS REPORT, 1981
B B S

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The last few decades have witnessed a rapid increase in the magnitude of poverty and inequality amongst the vast majority of the rural population in Bangladesh (ILO, 1977: 137; Alamgir, 1978: 11-18; Stepanek, 1979: 189; GOBD, 1980: 1-15; Osmani and Rahman, 1981: 22-33).

Scholars differ widely in explaining the ever increasing poverty and asset inequality in rural Bangladesh. One group would attribute it to natural/demographic factors as exemplified in their notion of of a predominant 'peasant mode of production' (Abdullah, Hossain and Nations, 1976; Abdullah, 1978; Khan and Latif, 1974). They were mainly inspired to reach such a categorisation of the Bangladesh economy by two findings from some macro-level surveys (GOP, 1962; Bose, 1973; BBS, 1977):

i) The absence of a substantial class of landlords and holders.

ii) The low level of the average size of holding.

From these findings the above scholars concluded that the rural economy of Bangladesh is best described as a 'peasant economy' based on small family farms operated primarily with family labour (Abdullah, Hossain and Nations, 1976: 210). Abdullah later elaborated this concept of a 'peasant mode of production' in these terms:

> The primary form of surplus-appropriation is direct appropriation by the direct producers, assoicated into 'collective workers' through the mediation of the kinship, in the form of domestic groups (augmented at need through the creation of putative kin relations). Access to the main means of production, and hence re-production of the unit of material appropriation, is basically controlled by kinship relations. The 'law of motion' of the mode depend mainly on natural/demographic factors.(Abdullah, 1978: 361)

Abdullah et al argues that inequality in the peasantry is a temporary phenomenon and is, therefore, "tolerable, domination veiled, and the stratification obscured by kinship and quasi-kinship formations in which dominance is legitimised through extra-economic personalised sanctions" (Abdullah et al, 1976: 217).

It is this network of personalised relations which reproduces the system of 'peasant economy' in the absence of known types of markets for land and labour (where normally "the blind laws of supply and demand work out their inexorable and impersonal logic"). In the 'peasant economy' the labour and land exchanges are embedded in more 'diffuse social relations' (Abdullah et al, 1976:216-217).

And once one accepts the above assertions, inequality amongst the peasantry becomes structurally insignificant. The peasantry then becomes "a social entity of comparatively low 'classness'....." (Abdullah et al, 1976: 217). In the presence of such a class harmony, rural development becomes merely a technical and cultural operation — the formation of farmer groups large enough to match the lumpy investment; and the problems of methods, since 'peasants' were autonomous, self-sufficient family farming units (Hart, 1971).

The Comilla model[1] of rural development, which started in the 1960s' was essentially based on the above notions of 'harmonious', 'homogeneous' peasantry. The presence of 'surplus' peasants and the 'domination' of the co-operatives by them do not negate the above notion of the peasantry. Their existence is explained largely in terms of "traditionally strong lineages which have managed to dominate the co-operatives, new irrigation opportunities, fertilizer distribution etc. through their political connections with government officials.." (Wood, 1978: 1).

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[1]The Comilla co-operative model consists of a two-tier structure: (i) the village based primary co-operatives called the KSS ('Krishi Samabaya Samiti' or Agricultural co-operative Association) and (ii) their federation at the thana level called the ACF (Agricultural Co-operatives' Federation). Akhter Hamid Khan, an ex-Civil Servant, conceived and led the programme during the 1960s, the first decade of its development.

There is the related notion that these elites do not constitue a class, since the division of the holding between sons ensures a process of "cyclical mobility" or indeed "cyclical kulakism" (Bertocci, 1972). Thus, to Bertocci, rural stratification appears flexible and fluid as the elites circulate over time and space (Bertocci, 1976: XVII).

This notion of homogeneity of the peasantry in Bangladesh has led policy makers to replicate the Comilla Co-operative model throughout the country in the name of Intregrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) in the early 1970s (Khan, 1979) and the latter-day comprehensive rural development in the late 1970s and early 1980s (GOBD, 1980: XVII).

In recent years, international organisations and aid giving agencies have been showing concern about the rural development strategy (McNamara, 1982). They too, subscribe to the views that nothing should be done to disturb the 'class harmony' which exists in the rural areas of the third world countries. While giving support to the view that in the absence of much socio-economic differences, population control policy can help mitigate the problems of poverty and inequality, these organisations advocate the preservation of homogeneity and equality[2] in the rural areas. Since Bangladesh is mainly an aid dependent country, the rural development policies advocated by these donor agencies do find reflection in its policies.

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[2]OECD, an important aid giving organisation emphasises the maintenance of homogeneity amongst the peasantry in these words:

> ..... giving priority to the poorest people, however, does not mean they have to be isolated and regarded as a clearly difined and homogenous group that can be reached as such. In fact, poor people differ among themselves in age, sex, religion, caste etc. In addition, their relationships with the rich vary according to many different factors: history, geography, and socio-economic and cultural context. Rural Development policy should endeavour to reach them through the basic group to which they belong: rural family, village or group of villages. The basic units rather than individual persons should be agents and beneficiaries of Rural Development policy. The more fortunate members of the units should not be excluded from Rural Development policy as is recommended by some specialists (OECD, 1978: 82).

At the other end of the spectrum, there is a group of scholars who insist that inequality and poverty are the signs of the gradual differentiation[3] of agrarian classes (Jahangir, 1979; Alamgir, 1978; Siddiqui, 1980b; Arens and Beurden, 1977; Haque, 1978; Rahman, 1979 etc). According to this group of scholars, the 'peasant' has experienced a fundamental revolution in his structural role in Bangladesh society: i.e. the social division of labour in rural Bangladesh has undergone a qualitative change. The peasantry has undergone certain processes causing them to be fragmented. As a result, there has been created a structural role for the 'peasant' in the over all social division of labour.

The two contrasting views on the peasantry in Bangladesh have striking similarities with the famous debate on the differentiation of the peasantry that took place in Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The debate played a crucial role in shaping the theoretical understanding of social forces in Russia on the eve of the Revolution (Lenin, 1977a; Cox, 1979; Shanin, 1972; Harrison, 1972, 1975, 1977; Solomon, 1977; Patnaik, 1979; Kitching 1982 etc.). Though this lively debate was suddenly pushed into the background during the collectivisation programme of Stalin, its significance, has, nevertheless, not diminished. Its influence is still very strong in present-day thinking on development. Historically, there developed a fierce debate between two schools of thought - the Populist and the Marxist which "proceeded unabated, rapidly increasing in sophistication, to reach a new and final height in the official 1926 debate conducted by the Soviet Agricultural Academy" (Shanin, 1980: 88-89).

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[3]Differentiation denotes (a) the processes of becoming separate distinct, specialized; the acquisition of specialized forms out of generalized or homogeneous ones; and (b) that which results from such a process (Gould and Kolb, 1964; 198-199).

The legacy of the Populist school of thought was borne by Chayanov, the director of the Academy and his other colleagues. This school of thought denied the significance of the social division of labour and found the peasantry as a more or less homogeneous entity, which showed extreme stability and viability over a long period of time. The inequalities which existed were a reflection of demographic processes associated with the generational cycle of peasant households (or family farms) (Chayanov, 1966: 66-69).

According to Chayanov, the difference within the peasant economy are purely temporary phenomenon: if sufficient time is allowed to pass, one would get a picture of 'complete static calm' in the relative sense of the term. Family size, being the adjusting variable, brings back this stability.

In sharp condradiction to the above 'demographic/non-social' ideas of differentiation of the peasantry, Marxist, especially Lenin, viewed the Russian peasantry as highly differentiated and fragmented into conflicting classes emanating from the development of commodity production and hence the social division of labour (Lenin, 1977a:37-192). Making use of the empirical investigation into the Russain peasantry (available in the form of Zemstvo statistics) Lenin proved that the old patriarchal peasantry was undergoing utter dissolution and that new types of rural inhabitants (i.e. the rural bourgeoisie and rural proletariat) were being created as the end product of the processes of differentiation. Kritsman and his followers made valuable methodological contributions to this debate in the post-Revolution period and carried forward the ideas of Lenin by applying them empirically (see Solomon, 1977 for details).

In the specific context of Bangladesh none of the studies cited earlier has made explict use of the conceptual tool called differentiation of peasantry. Neither was any attempt made to apply the concepts empirically through rigorous field work exercises. Arens and Beurden (1977), Siddiqui (1980b) and Jahangor (1979) made some good efforts to this end through extensive field works.

However, except for Jahangir, they did not address explicitly the issue of differentiation. Jahangir's study, for its part, has failed to draw its conceptual hyptheses from the debate on differentiation and most of his findings look, at times, exaggerated and superficial.

In view of these research gaps the present study attemps to operationalise the concepts of differentiation that we have highlighted and test the hypotheses propounded by both the Chayanovian and Leninist schools of thought. To that end, we focus primarily on two villages of Bangladesh where I have done extensive fieldwork. I plan to proceed in the following way:

Chapter II elaborates upon the Russian debate on differentiation i.e. between the two schools of thought - the Chayanovian and the Leninist. We will focus here not only on the theoretical but also on the methodoligical innovations which both schools made in the course of their intellectual exercises.

Chapter III considers the applicability of the debate in the context of Bangladesh. Here we also consider some of the similar attempts made by others in the context of other third world countries. We also bring out certain hypotheses to be tested empirically in the specific context of rural Bangladesh.

Chapter IV, mainly based on macro-level data, provides a broad overview of the agrarian structure and the concomitant inequality in rural Bangladesh since the 1940s. This chapter forms the macro background for the micro-level investigations that follow.

In Chapter V, I put to the test the Chayanovian and related hypotheses on the demographic differentiation of the peasantry. I first test the hypotheses drawn from Chayanov in the context of two villages in which I collected data and then I examine the typotheses put forward by Shanin on the cyclical mobility by constructing mobility matrices with the help of data collected during my field study. Here I put to use the new methodology of collecting historical data through memory recall.

Chapter VI tests the Leninist hypotheses on concentration of landownership/control and the consequent inequalities in rural Bangladesh.

Chapter VII examines the differences in the material elements of production other than land.

Chapter VIII, IX, and X attempt to explain the underlying factors that cause differentiation of the peasantry in Leninist lines.

Chapter VIII examines the social relations of production mainly centring around land-man relations, tenural arrangements, transfer of land, commercilization and impact of new technology.

Chapter IX examines the labour exploitation as an element of differentiation. Here I examine the extent of rural proletarianisation, focussing on the growth of hired labourers and class-in-itself changes.

Chapter X focusses on the state and the peasantry. In this chapter I bring out the role of the state as a vehicle of creating differences in the asset-ownership mechanism in rural Bangladesh.

Chapter XI concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER II

THE RUSSIAN DIFFERENTIATION DEBATE

It is inconceivable to have any substantive discussion of differentiation of the peasantry in any country without considering the issues raised in the Russian debate on this in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The debate had its roots in the exchanges between Populists and Marxists during the later part of the nineteenth century. It followed from two divergent political views which came into conflict on the general question of the destiny of capitalism in Russia.

1. THE POPULIST VIEW

A majority of Russian intellectuals believing in the Populist cause came from the disciplines of philosophy, theology, art and literature and raised a variety of moral and social considerations rather than economic ones. We, however, will primarily concentrate here on the thoughts of the economists of the time. We will, infact,state the Populist position depending mainly on two major economic theorists of Russian populism in the 1880s and 1890s, V.P. Vorontsov and N. Danielson (Kitching, 1982: 37-39). They, unlike their predecessors, Herzen and Chernyshevsky (Venturi, 1966: 147-67), conceded that capitalism had commenced in Russia, but argued that the nature of that capitalist development was artificial in the face of an insignificant home market and, therefore, had no future there. While elaborating the idea, these two scholars argued that capitalist industrialization in Russia had occurred under the auspices of the state and under strong control of the banks. Moreover it was dependent on advanced technology imported from the west. These three factors compelled the industrial plants to be large-scale and capital intensive, employing very few workers. Simultaneously, the industrialization tended to be more and more capital intensive to raise output per worker. Danielson, especially, held that this implied an ever increasing volume of output and proportionately fewer number of workers. As a result the share of wages in total income would fall. Ever expanding, capitalist industrialization was

destroying the indigenous handicraft activities of the peasants. In addition, the crushing taxation imposed on the peasantry to pay for the industrialization was ruining all but a few. It was bound to encounter an early and impassable blockage in the destruction of the home market (Walicki, 1969: 115-26; Kitching, 1982: 37-38). In the absence of an adequate home market and at the same time Russia being a late comer in capitalist development and in a weaker position as an exporter, capitalism had no potential in Russia. They thought that Russia had her future in the peasantry and indigeneous small-scale industrial activities less destructive to the peasantry.

In otherwords, they believed that the mir (or the obschina[1]) was still a vital and flourishing institution. Extolling the virtues of 'peoples' production' in the obschinas, the Populists argued that it would be possible to build upon this already existing foundation an institutional framework(through 'changes in state policy to include cheap credit for artisans and other non-agricultural producers, lower taxes and rents for the peasantry, and free agricultural advice to the peasants to enable them to increase their productivity' as advocated by Vorontsov, see Kitching, 1982: 38) to make a direct transition to a kind of agrarian socialism without passing through a horrifying stage of capitalism. The basic assumption behind all these pupulist assertions was a homogeneous, self-sufficient peasantry.

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[1] The Obshchina was, prior to the abolition of Serfdom in Russia (in 1861), the unit responsible to the landlord for peasant rent payments and/or for the organization of peasant work on the lord's land. These responsibilities were exercised by a council of elders. This council was known as the mir, and it acted in the name of Obshchina for most purposes. As a result, the two terms appear in most literature interchangeably (Kitching, 1982: 35). The mir exercised the power of allocation and redivision of land tilled by peasant households for their subsistence. These powers were supposed broadly to keep landholdings in accord with family needs. After the abolition of Serfdom in 1861 by Tsar Alexender II the Obschinas retained the collective obligations to ensure the payment of rent for land tilled by peasants which remained in the lord's possession. Populists were attracred by this communal spirit of the mir.

Populists also showed anti-urbanism and suspicion of money and credit (Kitching, ibid: 39).

2. THE MARXIST VIEW: LENIN

These Populist views of the 1880s and 1890s were fiercely opposed by Russian radicals and Marxists. Plekhanov and Lenin, the two noted Marxists, argued that Capitalism could not be avoided and was advancing rapidly aided by the very state to which Vorontsov was appealing to alter the whole process. As a part of this, they said, the unity of the village was a myth. The rich and the poor peasants were already divided by their class interests. Lenin's classic, The Development of Capitalism in Russia (1899) was designed to refute Vorontsov's and Danielson's (appearing as Mr V.V. and Mr N - in Lenin's text) arguments concerning the necessary collapse of the home market (Lenin, 1977a). Lenin argued, instead, the very ruin of peasant handicrafts and the growth of impoverishment in the peasantry extended the home market. According to Lenin, capitalism was already the dominant tendency in the Russian countryside as well as in the towns. Russian peasants, argued Lenin, had already found themselves in commodity production and it was incorrect to think any longer of the peasantry as a homogeneous entity.

Lenin, after carefully examining the contemporary 'Zemstvo Statistics', demonstrated that there existed an unequal distribution of resources which automatically produced a stratified peasantry. He also predicted that under the competitive market system, economic advantages and disadvantages would develop cumulatively and that the peasantry would be eventually polarised into two distinct groups of unequal size. The peasantry would then be seen to be characterised by all the major contradictions of a developing commodity economy (Lenin, 1977a: 175) viz:

(i) Competition;
(ii) the struggle for economic independence;
(iii) grabbing of land (purchasable and rentable);
(iv) Concentration of production in the hands of a minority;
(v) the forcing of the majority into the ranks of the proletariat;
(vi) the exploitation of the proletariat by a minority through the medium of merchant's capital;
(vii) the hiring of farm labourers.

The sum total of all these contradictions among the peasantry, according to Lenin, is the differentiation of the peasantry. 'Depeasantisating' is almost synonymous with this term. Lenin further emphasised that this process of disintegration of the peasantry and the emergence of property inequality was not sufficient to be termed differentiation. Differentiation signified much more. It ousted the old peasantry and brought in new types of inhabitants - the rural bourgeoisie (chiefly petty bourgeoisie and the rural proletariat - one class being commodity producers and the other class turning into agricultural wage workers).

While Lenin was theorising the concept of differentiation of the peasantry (mainly the small producers) he had in mind Chapter 47 of Marx's Capital III on Genesis of Capitalist Ground Rent. In this chapter Marx identified three types of rents - labour rent, rent-in-kind, and money-rent. In Marx's words:

> Labour rent arises in a system where the direct producers using instruments of labour (plough, cattle etc) which actually or legally belong to him, cultivates soil actually owned by him during part of the week, and works during the remaining days upon the estate of the feudal lord without any compensation from the feudal lord ..... (Marx, Das Kapital, Vol III, 323 as quoted in Lenin, 1977a: 177).

Rent-in-kind originates when the direct producer produces the entire product on land which he himself exploits, and gives up to the landowner the whole of the surplus product-in-kind. The producer here becomes more independent and is enabled to acquire by his labour a certain surplus over and above the amount of produce that satisfies his indispensable needs.

In Marx's view:

> ..... this form will give rise to greater differences in the economic position of the individual direct producers. At least the possibility for such a differentiation exists, and the possibility for the direct producer to have in turn acquired the means to exploit other labourers directly (Marx, Das Kapital, Vol III, 329 as quoted in Lenis, 1977a: 178).

Therefore, a possibility of differentiation is there in the rent-in-kind system. This possibility or the 'germs' (as Lenin would call it) can develop only under the next form of rent, money-rent, which represents a mere change in the form of rent-in-kind.

In the case of money-rent, the direct producer gives up in favour of the owner of the land not produce, but the price of this produce in terms of money. Here too, the direct producer remains the traditional possessor of the land. Money-rent, however, presupposes a considerable development of commerce, urban industry, commodity production in general, and thereby of money circulation. The relationship between the peasant and the landowner then becomes purely a cash contract-based one. This results in the expropriation of the old peasantry on the one hand, and in peasant buying out his land and his liberty, on the other. The transformation of rent-in-kind into money-rent is furthermore not only inevitably accompanied, but is even anticipated, by the formation of a class of propertyless day-labourers, who hire themselves out for money. During their genesis, when this new class appears but sporadically, a custom necessarily develops among the more prosperous peasants, subject to rent payments of exploiting agricultural wage labourers for their own account. According to Marx :

> ... In this way they gradually acquire the capability of accumulating a certain amount of wealth and themselves becoming transformed into future capitalists. The old self-employed possessors of land themselves thus give rise to a nursery school for capitalist tenants, whose development is conditioned by the general development of capitalist production beyond the bounds of the countryside (Marx, Das Kapital, Vol.III as quoted in Lenin, 1977a: 179)

It is important, therefore, to note that for Lenin differentiation of the peasantry and the process of capitalist development are identical. Differentiation of the peasantry, which develops at the expense of the "middle" peasantry, creates two new types of rural

inhabitants - the rural bourgeoisie and the rural workers. The middle peasantry (emphasis mine) is thus not representative of the so-called 'community spirit' but is distinguished by the least development of commodity production. The middle peasants, in most cases, cannot make both ends meet and hence resort to loans, which are to be repaid by labour services. Any pressure on the economy, like a crop failure creates a few more proletarians out of these middle peasants. Only a lucky few go up to the rank of capitalists. Thus a process, specifically characteristic of a capitalist economy, takes place; the middle members are swept away and the extremes are reinforced. This is the process of "depeasantising", i.e. differentiation.

Using 'Zemstvo Statistics' and the 'Horse Census', Lenin grouped the peasantry into different categories and demonstrated empirically that the process of differentiation was in motion in the Russian countryside. But he was careful to stress that the speed of differentiation was often halted: for example, because of the presence of usurious capital, or labour service.

On the other hand, the speed was accelerated by migration of the labouring class and the simultaneous development of the industrial sector. Lenin used two broad indices in order to demonstrate the differentiation of households in rural Russia: the amount of sown area and the number of horses. Later many of Lenin's followers made several attempts to improve the methodology of studying differentiation of the peasantry. Khryaschcheva (1911) and Baskin (1913) were two of the leading agrarian Marxists who tried to improve Lenin's indices of differentiation. Khryaschcheva supplemented Lenin's indices of 'sown area' and 'horses owned' with three other indices: i.e. family labour, cows owned and land owned (Shanin, 1980: 90). Baskin in 1913 introduced wage labour usage, non-agricultural income and enterprise ownership in addition to land sown as indices to classify the peasantry. The Marxists argued that Stolypin's reforms of 1906 and 1910 invested ownership of the land in the head of the cultivating household and severed connections with the Obschchina and abolished the powers of land redivision and allocation of mir. In addition the tax burden was transferred from the mir to the individual household heads (Gerschenkorn, 1962: 134; Kitching, 1982: 40). The reforms were designed to encourage more enterprising peasants to buy

the lands of their neighbours and become large-scale commercial farmers. At the same time, less successful peasant farmers were forced to join the ranks of the rapidly growing industrial proletariat or become labourers on the land of the more successful peasants. Despite all these signs of a ever-increasing pace of capitalism, the Russian Populists continued to minimize the significance of this development. In the wake of the Stolypin reforms, they continued to argue that except in a few untypical and highly commercialized areas near towns and cities Obshchinas remained untouched by these changes as the peasants did not take advantage of these legally available opportunities.

The debate continued right up to 1917. The 1917-21 Revolution and Civil War led to considerable levelling within the Russian villages and the middle peasantry, instead of being swept away (as predicted by Lenin), showed some resistance.

So the debate continued well after the Revolution. Though set in a different context, the followers of both schools of thought continued to argue with increasing theoretical and empirical sophistication.

3. THE ORGANISATION - PRODUCTION SCHOOL

Encouraged by the resistance shown by the middle peasantry, a group of rural researchers emerged in the Russian academic field who began to carry forward the ideas of the Populists in a different guise - which became known as Neo-populists.[2] This group which came to be

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[2] Neo-populism is distinguished from populism in that it is not a purely anti-capitalist doctrine, but rather opposes all forms of large-scale industrialisation including socialism. In the specific Russian context, Neo-populists put forward, for the first time the coherent economic argument that small-scale peasant production might have certain advantages over large-scale capital intensive agriculture (Kitching, 1982: 41-42). They thought reliance on the slow improvement of peasant agriculture was actually far more efficient, in certain circumstances, than large capitalist or state farms.

identified as the Organisation - Production Scholars (led by Chayanov) claimed that their work on the internal structure of the family farm and its viability as an entity was the most important item of rural inquiry.

Their defence of the peasantry has to be located in the specific historical context of Russia. After the Revolution, Russia had become a country of individual peasant holdings, and during the NEP period the main concern of the Bolshevik regime was how to improve the productivity of these holdings. In addition, they were anxious to secure food supply to the cities. The nine years (1914-23) of war and civil war caused Russian industry to collapse completely. This meant there were no consumer goods for which the peasant could exchange their grain. The NEP sought to restore the grain supply by allowing a free market and simultaneously trying to expand the production of the consumer goods which the peasant wanted. However, this policy faced fierce critisism from within the ruling communist party. Trotsky played a leading role amongst these critics. They argued that this policy would strenghten the hands of the rich peasants or Kulaks who provided most of the marketed surplus of grain. They proposed that peasant agriculture would have to be collectivised and then mechanised. Simultaneously, priority should be given to the producers goods rather than consumer goods. This would ensure industrial growth in the long run to provide modern inputs (fertilizer, tractors) to develop agriculture and ensuring rising food supply to the cities.[3]

In this situation Chayanov's book (1926) represented a defence of the peasantry and opposition to the above views. In addition he continued to represent many of the populist views in more sophisticated forms.

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[3] E. Preobrazhensky's The New Economics (1926) was the theoretical statement of the views of the critics of NEP.

According to Daniel Thorner:

"Chayanov synthesized the theoretical ideas of his predecessors and developed them along original lines" (Thorner in the introduction of Chayanov, 1966: XII).

While Chayanov was emerging as an important defender of the homogeneous peasantry, a group of Agrarian Marxists led by Kritsman (1925) felt strongly that the most urgent task for research in post-revolution Russia was the study of the social and economic stratification of the peasantry (Solomon, 1977; Shanin, 1980; Cox, 1979). Thus the debate continued throughout the 1920s. Although it initially centred around the academic spheres in a good spirit, later it became a tool for political rivalry and had an unhappily abrupt ending.

We will here present the contrasting views on the Russian peasantry in the 1920s in two stages: first the views and methods of investigation of the peasantry of the Agrarian Marxists[4] and secondly, the ideas of Chayanov in detail.[5]

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4 We will examine the methodological developments of Kritsman and his associates in detail in Chapter III with a view to bring out certain testable empirical methods for classifying the peasantry in a present-day Third World country. We will make attempt to apply these indices later in our empirical chapters.

5 Since, Chayanov is correctly put forward by Thorner as the representative of the school of thought opposed to Lenin, we will concentrate on his ideas to focus on the other side of the debate. In the words of Thorner:

> In fact, Chayanov's whole approach - his selection of the pure family farm as the typical Russian unit, his insistence on the survival power of such family farms, and his treatment of rural differentiation in terms of demographic cycles rather than class antagonisms - was diametrically opposed to that of Lenin. (Thorner, in the Introduction of Chayanov, 1966: XXI)

4. KRITSMAN AND HIS FELLOW AGRARIAN MARXISTS ON THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE PEASANTRY:

The Agrarian Marxists, in the 1920s, involved themselves in enunciating and improving a theory in the Marxist tradition and made valuable contributions towards developing an appropriate methodology to study the problems which they considered crucial at that time. Kritsman and his fellow Agrarian Marxists faced a peculiar situation arising out of inverse leasing in the post-Revolution and Civil War Russia. For example, in the new context, a rich peasant was increasingly hired in, together with his implements and horses, by his poor neighbours. In the new circumstances of NEP, Kritsman and his associates, therefore, concluded that the emerging pattern of differentiation could not be explained with the help of the older indices (Cox, 1979: 2-4). He argued that stratification by 'sown area' (originally suggested by Lenin) was inadequate as the peasantry was being differentiated by the ownership of scarce animals rather than land sown (which had levelled off). The ownership of these scarce animals reflected, in post-Revolution Russia, the extent of dependence of farms. They thus advocated collecting data on direct class indices such as the hire and sale of labour power, the rent and lease of land and the hire and lease of stock and working animals.

Kritsman and others noticed that farms entered into different types of relationships depending on the extent of possession of the above factors.[6] Kritsman argued that it should be possible to discover the predominant balance of relations engaged in by a particular farm and subsequently use this to characterise the class nature of that farm. In Kritsman's own categorizations (Cox, 1977: 3) in 1925 :

(i) a farm whose relations were predominantly expropriating was termed 'enterpreneurial;

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6 The discussion on Kritsman and other Agrarian Marxists draws heavily from the well-organised paper by Cox (1979). Occasionally, we have also consulted Shanin (1980) and Solomon (1979).

(ii) a farm whose relations were predominantly exploited was termed 'dependent' and

(iii) a farm whose relations were more or less in balance between exploiting and exploited tendency was considered to be an 'independent' farm.

While Kritsman was conceptualising these relations and developing the Agrarian Marxist methodology, Nemchinov (a statistician working in the Urals region and not a member of Moscow-based Kritsman group) was inspired by Kritsman's work and made an attempt to operationalise his ideas (Solomon, 1977: 95-97; Shanin, 1980: 92-93; Cox 4). Nemchinov's schema can be summarised as follows:

Chart 2.1

Use of Means of Production by Farm Type

Conditions and Means of Production	On Own Farm		On Other's Farm Own Means production
	Other's	Own	
1. Land	Entrepreneurial	Independent	Dependent
2. Basic capital (cattle stock, farm buildings)	Dependent	Independent	Entrepreneurial
3. Variable capital (seed, fodders fertilizer)	Dependent	Independent	Entrepeneurial
4. Labour Power	Entrepreneurial	Independent	Dependent

Source: Cox, 1979: 4; Solomon, 1977: 96

The chart 2·1 ,, though describing essentially qualitative relations, could also be given a quantitative character by setting monetary values on all the means of production.[7] The results obtained after setting the monetary valuations could be used to categorize farms according to their overall predominant tendencies. Nemchinov used the following groupings (Cox, 1979: 4):

Chart 2·2

Farm Categorization

1.	Dependent:	(a) More than 50% dependent in their relations with other farms;
		(b) 15-50% dependent;
2.	Independent:	(a) 2.5-15% dependent;
		(b) up to 2.5% dependent or up to 2.5% enterpreneurial
		(c) 2.5%-15% entrrpreneurial;
3.	Entrepreneurial:	More than 15% entrepreneurial.

7 The valuation of the means of production was actually not a simple matter; it involved several points of discretion. Thus land in excess of the "consumption norm" was to be valued at the level of local rent; both basic capital and circulating capital had to be valued to include amortization and labour had to be valued to include different types of work, agricultural and crafts, at the going average market wage rate. (see Solomon, 1977: 247).

Using these groupings Nemchinov set the basic pattern for the methodology to be employed by Agrarian Marxists for the remainder of 1920s. Nemchinov claimed that his approach was much more sensitive to the social relationships among the peasantry and maintained that his method was not all-inclusive and could be supplemented by grouping peasant farms according to their economic strength (i.e. according to their income)(Solomon, 1977: 97).

Kritsman welcomed Nemchinov's ideas, though he made some critical comments about his detail. He also made a few modifications. Kritsman argued that Nemchinov had viewed labour and the means of production separately. This had misled Nemchinov to assert that a peasant's labour on his own farm was an indicator of his independence. The peasant could be termed as independent, emphasised Kritsman, only if he laboured with his own means of production (Solomon, 1977: 99).

Kritsman also found certain limitations in the method of calculation used by Nemchinov in working out the balance of tendencies within a farm. He advocated two rules of calculation instead (Cox, 1979: 4):

(i) For farms hiring labour and leasing out stock the ratio should be calculated of the household's own labour to all labour employed on their farms and the ratio of their own means of production employed on their own farms to the total value of their own means of production wherever it was employed.

(ii) For farms selling labour power and hiring stock or animals the ratio should be calculated of their own labour on their own farms to their total labour power wherever it was employed, and the ratio of their own means of production on their own farms to all means of production employed on their own farms.

In the first case the calculation revealed the extent to which the farm was tending toward capitalism while in the second case it was the extent to which they were tending towards proletarianisation.

Kritsman claimed that this kind of calculation would reflect a truer approximation of rural relations. Kritsman's two rules later became the core of the Agrarian Marxist's methodology for the study of the differentiation of the peasantry. A number of studies developed centring around this methodological principle in the later 1920s (for example, Anisimov, Vermenichev and Naumov on 'Production Characteristics of Peasant Farms of Different Social Groups' in 1927; Vermenichev, Gaister and Raevich on '710 Farmsteads in the Samara Countryside' in 1927; Gaister on 'Stratification of Soviet Countryside' again in 1927 etc.)(See Solomon, 1977: 100-110 for details).

The Agrarian Marxist School developed these rural studies with the utmost care partly to oppose the claims, the Organisation - Production School led by Chayanov was making on the resistance of the independent middle peasantry and consequently the viability of the family farm economy. So we may now turn our attention to the views of Chayanov and his school.

5. THE ORGANISATION - PRODUCTION SCHOOL ON DIFFERENTIATION:

Contrary to the Marxist approach, the Organisation-Production School led by Chayanov viewed the differentiation of the peasantry primarily as a demographic phenomenon. To them, it was more a measure of relative family size and composition than of differential economic success. Farm size being the most important indicator of a peasant's wealth, it was argued that farm size tended to follow a cycle coincident with the peasant family life cycle, increasing as family members matured into workers and declining as the family aged and disintegrated with the formation of new families (Millar, 1970: 220)

Chayanov draws this conclusion from a number of fundamental concepts eg. family labour farm, the single labour income and the labour-consumer balance. By family labour farm, Chayanov conceives it as a particular form of economic unit in Russia. It is a production and consumption unit which makes its living from the land, sometimes with supplementary non-agricultural income (e.g. the seasonal non-agricultural work i.e, crafts and trade) by utilising its own family labour (with no hired labour) (Chayanov, 1966: 272-73). For such a unit, labour

is not a variable cost but a fixed cost. The agricultural activities in which such farms are involved are first and foremost the source of subsistance and not of profit (as in the case of a capitalist farm). For such peasant families, there will be a customary or socially accepted minimum level of subsistence. A peasant family depends mainly on its own family labour and the land to achieve this minimum level of subsistence (Kitching, 1982: 48).

Since the family labour farm is the basic unit of production, there is a concomitant family labour product which is the only possible category of income for a peasant or artisan family labour unit, for there is no way of decomposing it analytically or objectively. Since there is no social phenomenon of wages, the social phenomenon of net profit is also absent. Thus it is impossible to apply the capitalist profit calculation (Chayanov, 1966: 5). Chayanov refers to this family labour product as a 'single labour income' (Chayanov, 1966: 41).

A peasant family will work for as long and as hard as is required to earn its labour product or labour income needed to obtain the minimum subsistence. But having once attained it, their labour input will begin to drop sharply. This is because the work on the land with only primitive technology is a physically laborious and tiring job (Chayanov terms it 'drudgery') and peasants will not continue doing it a moment longer than they have to. But conversely they will continue doing it for as long as they have to, even if the marginal return for thier labour is actually negative. In other words, the peasant does not respond to diminishing marginal returns for labour in the way that the capitalist does.

The extent of effort made by each family is adjusted to the pressure of the consumption demands made by the members of that family (Littlejohn, 1977: 120). This equilibrium is called 'the labour consumer balance'.

The intensity of this pressure has been defined by Chayanov as a function of family composition. Thus the 'labour/consumer balance' is not only determined by the 'drudgery' but also the size and composition of the family, in particular by the proportion of its members able to work (called the 'consumer-worker' ratio).

When a family is composed of few adults and a lot of small children, its 'labour/consumer balance' is adverse. In that case, it has a large number of dependents whose consumption needs cannot be balanced by their capacity to produce. So the amount of drudgery required from the working adults in the family is likely to be large. When, however, the children grow up and can contribute much more to the production of the food and other essentials they consume, then the labour-consumer balance improves and at a stage becomes positive. The amount of drudgery from the adult members of the family required to obtain the total family subsistence is likely to fall.

But children grow up, marry and split up to set up their own family farms. So both the amount of labour input required for the subsistence of aging parents left on their own and their capacity to undertake 'drudgery' fall. And with it falls the farm income. Meanwhile, on the new farms created by the splitting of the family, the demographic cycle - and with it the cycle of peasant family income rising - is starting again (Kitching 1982: 49-50).

Based on the above arguments, the Chayanovian School attributes the differences in the economic productivity of farms, resource distribution and many other such differences to the forces of demography (mainly the family size). Hence the name of their theory: demographic differentiation (Soloman, 1977: 117). This theory underlines that the demographic cycle ensures that no peasant family can obtain a permanent position of superiority over others, though it might do so temporarily. The observed variations or inequality in farm size at a point in time can be explained largely by variations in the family size. That means, there is effectively very little or no inequality of landholding among different farms.

Chayanov's primary emphasis on the family size rather than on farm size stems from the assumption that sown area is not a given constant for the individual farm, because all farms can and do mobilize land at short notice through the short-term rented land market

(Harrison, 1975: 399). Therefore sown area cannot be a determinant. So family size and family growth are the independent variables: as the family grows, the farm takes in more land through short-term rent. The family labour force can exploit the increased sown area through increased capital investment and increased capital productivity. That means, one can see families in different stages of the life cycle and in the various strata.

To support his propositions on the biologically determined differentiation Chayanov cites two sets of correlation (Chayanov, 1966: 61-64). One set relates to sown area per holding (as the dependent variable) to family size (as the independent variable) and the second relates gross agricultural income (as a proxy for sown area) to family size. The first exercise indicates that larger farms tend to have larger families. In the second, Chayanov finds a high degree of correlation between the family size and the measure of agricultural activity. He then reproduces Provokich's findings on the co-relation co-efficient for farm agricultural income and family size. In this case, the relationship is linear and the co-relation co-efficients are stated to be 0.64 and 0.61 between gross agricultural income and number of workers, and gross agricultural income and number of consumers respectively (Chayanov, 1966: 64)

The above explanation, as Chayanov points out, is based on static data collected at a point in time. Next he goes for a dynamic explanation of his theory of demographic differentiation. He takes the help of repeated statistical censuses carried out in a technical manner which allowed a genetic link to be established between the farms from which they came and which had been statistically described decades ago. Taking the sown area as a measure of peasant wealth and the volume of economic activity, Chayanov shows a clearly expressed dependence between development of a peasant family and the size of area sown by it (Kerblay, 1971: 157). He supports his proof with regional statistics of the evolution of peasant holdings and families from 1882 to 1911. He argues the case from the other way round:

When we study the dynamics of these farms with the view that family size is entirely determined by its economic situation we might expect that farms sowing small areas will in the course of fifteen years continue to sow the same small areas and that farms well endowed will as before sow large areas and retain a large family. The works of Chernenkov, Khryashcheva, Vikhlyaev, Kushchenko and others, however, tell us something completely different. This may be seen from table (1-10), which is analogous to all the others, comparing the 1882 and 1911 censuses for Surazh Vezd, Chernigov Gubernia. (Chayanov, 1966: 67).

Chayanov's Table 1-10 is as follows:

1911 Sown Area by 1982 Sown Area Groups (%)

Desyatinas Sown in 1882	Desyatinas Sown in 1911					Total
	0-3	3.6	6-9	9-12	>12	
0-3	28.2	47.0	20.0	2.4	2.4	100
3-6	21.8	47.5	24.4	8.2	2.4	100
6-9	16.2	37.0	26.8	11.3	2.4	100
9-12	9.6	35.8	26.1	12.4	16.1	100
>12	3.5	30.5	28.5	15.6	21.9	100

Source: Chayanov, 1966: 67

While explaining the table, Chayanov argues that just as cross-sectional variations in farm size are determined by variations in family size, the changes in the distribution of holdings by area over time are also determined by changes in family size.

We see that a considerable part of the farms that sowed small areas gradually acquired a labour force as family age and size increased and by expanding their sown area passed into the higher groups, thus also expanding the volume of their activity. Conversely, former large farms

passed into lower groups corresponding to small families created after division (Chayanov, 1966: 67).

From this, Chayanov concludes that the demographic processes of growth and family distribution mainly determine the distribution of farms by size of sown area and numbers of livestock, and not the other way round. This is, in a nutshell, the basic structure of Chayanov's theory of demographic differentiation (emphasis mine).

As one can find from his table (1-10), Chayanov identifies two different currents in the peasantry. The class with small sown area shows great growing power, and almost three quarters of its farms pass into higher sown area classes. From the same table, on the other hand, he identifies classes with large sown area (in 1882) as declining and breaking down in the later period. Thus in the case where the young, undivided farms with small sown area mainly participate, consumption needs are rising, expanidng the volume of its farms under pressure of family growth. The other is declining, largely due to the division of old, complex families.

As a result of the inter-relationship between these two counterposed social currents, peasant farm composition is established at any particular moment and gives a distribution by sown area classes. If both currents are mutually balanced, then despite the fact that individual farms will pass in great numbers from class to class, the numerical relationship will remain unchanged. If a wholesale comparison of the two censuses, separated by a long time interval, is made, one gets a picture of 'complete static calm'. Even though they are formed by completely different farms the classes as such remain the same. Their absolute positions may differ but their heterogeneity or peasant farm differentiation will be of the same degree relative to the time of the initial registration. That is how Chayanov establishes his mechanism of movement in the peasantry's social composition. He calls this process 'demographic differentiation' - thus stressing that the chief cause of differences in farm size is the demographic

processes of family growth as its age increases and not social factor causing peasant farms to become either capitalist or proletarian as argued by the Agrarian Marxists.

Thus Chayanov disagreed with Lenin over the painful decomposition of the Russian peasantry into a rural petty borgeoisie and a rural proletariat. In contrast he found in the peasantry the capacity to reproduce itself.

The Organisation-Production School was not only busy formulating theoretical ideas, but also continuously carried out sophisticated empirical research to support their theoretical convictions.[8] Whenever an opportunity came, they used their well organised empirical findings to confirm and extend the propositions of the theory of non-capitalist economics (i.e. peasant economics) and reasserting their claim that the family farm was a viable economic unit in the new circumstances.

The school's research on farm budgets was definitely their major achievement. Chelintsev, Makarov and many others (Solomon, 1977: 61-117) generated statistical information which rarely provided the kind of data on the basis of which it could be asserted that socio-economic factors dominated the rural society. They, very often, found the viability and dominance of the small family farm as the trend in rural Russia.[9]

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[8] Harrison says: "Chayanov and his colleagues were almost the only people working on these problems, gathering data, analysing and publishing them, who involved themselves both on the theoretical side and in the organisational problems of the co-operative ....."(Harrison, 1975: 414).

[9] The Chayanovian School believed that the small family farm had at least two decisive advantages over the large capitalist farm. Firstly, it had a secured source of labour i.e. family labour and did not need to buy labour at a higher price. Secondly, since its chief motive of production was to meet subsistence needs anyhow, so it was invariably willing to pay more for land and equipment than its capitalist rival, and consequently would beat its competitor in the race to acquire these means of cultivation (Solomon, 1977: 121).

As we have noted earlier many of Chayanovian views were challenged by the Agrarian Marxists led by Kritsman. In the late 1920s the debate became quite untenable because of political accusations and counter accusations by each group of intellectuals. Moreover, the crisis of grain supply, planned industrialization and enforced collectivisation left no room for scholary arguments in the prevailing atmosphere. A congress of Agrarian Marxists was hastily summoned in 1929, not to debate issues, but to condemn enemies. This was done quite successfully as Shanin points out (Shanin, 1972: 61). Then the flood of collectivization and the great purge swept away the differentiation debate and, with it, its main participants.

The debate that ended abruptly in the late 1920s in Russia continues even today in the context of the Third World. The views expressed by the Russian populists and Neopopulists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century can be seen to be reflected (though not always in exactly the same forms) in the present day development thinking in Third World countries with substantial peasant populations.[10] Since the translation of Chayanov's book in English in 1966 by Daniel Thorner et al the interest in peasant studies has increased tremendously (Harrison, 1975: 390-91). Many of the present studies of the Third World attempt to analyse the problems of peasant agriculture in essentially Chayanovian terms. The poorest peasants, they suggest, are mainly using family labour and very simple technologies to produce for their own subsistence, plus a small surplus which they sell for cash. Many of them, while giving primacy to agriculture and rural development (Kitching 1982: 72) argue in terms of 'small is beautiful', 'low classness' and 'peasant co-operation' - as was stressed in the pre-Revolution Russia. Implicity they refer to the peasantry as 'countryfolk' or a single rural class united by convergent anti-urban

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10 Kitching has specifically pointed out that the ideas and development strategies promoted by scholars like Shanin, Lipton, Schumachar and policy makers like President Julius Nyrere of Tanzania and world bodies like ILO, World Bank have historical links with the populist and neopopulist ideas (Kitching, 1982: Chapter 4).

interests (Lipton, 1977: 23, 86, 112, 117 etc.) and thus portraying it as more or less homogeneous. Arguing in the same line, they assert that demographic pressures and not socio-economic differences constitute the main problem.

Of those who have been profoundly influenced by these Chayanovian ideas, Shanin has emerged as the most prominent. Shanin in exactly the same way as Chayanov, argues that the differences amongst peasant households are purely temporary and that there is constant 'multi-directional mobility' among different groups of peasants, no class will, therefore, crystallise to cause class differentiation within the peasantry (Shanin, 1972: 73-74). We will discuss Shanin's ideas in more detail in the next chapter.

But the Chayanovian ideas as in the past, do not go unchallenged in the present. For example, Harrison (1975) and Utsa Patnaik (1979) are two notable scholars who have mounted a challenge. Infact, Harrison has subjected Chayanov to the closest scrutiny. Harrison has not only opposed the Chayanovian views on the demographic differentiation but has recalculated and reanalysed the data for Starobelsk district (on which Chayanov depended so much in formulating his theory) in order to question the empirical validity of Chayanov's assertions. Patnaik reemphasised some of Harrison's findings in order to find the internal inconsistency of Chayanovian theory of demographic differentiation. Both Harrison and Patnaik raise doubts about the adjusting power of the dependency ratio which explains the homogeneity in the peasantry.

Harrison rearranged data on family size, sown area, income and expenditure of 101 peasant farms of Starobelsk district in 1910 (see Harrison, 1975: tables 2, 3, and 4) and reached the conclusion that:

> Family dependency was a relatively <u>insignificant</u> (emphasis mine) factor in economic inequality, and that farm size and family income per head are related together and with other factors in much more important ways (Harrison, 1975: 400).

Elsewhere, Harrison, (Harrison, 1972 as quoted by Patnaik, 1979: 382) presented his recalculated data on the district of Starobelsk and it has been found that for the same period (which Chayanov was referring to, 1882 to 1911) family size less than trebled while the size of farm increased over a thousand fold. In other words, landholding per worker was over a hundred times higher on the largest farms compared to the smallest. Moreover, as Harrison asserted, Starobelsk was located in one of the most backward and commercially underdevloped province of Kharkov (Harrison, 1972). And if Harrison found an inequality of this magnitude in such a district, one can argue that Chayanov's own data suggest a highly differentiated peasantry in Russia during the early 20th century. Surely, the peasant household of a desyatina of land per capita will be in a qualitatively different position compared to the peasant household with four and a half desyatinas of land per capita.

So correlation alone does not imply a undifferentiated peasantry. One must look for the changes in the comparative positions of the correlated elements.

Patnaik argues along the same lines. Her agruments on correlation exercises may be summarized as follows:

(1) The finding that there is a close correlation between the large farms and the larger families, is not something typical for Russia alone but is also characteristic of all economies with a substantial peasantry. As the Indian Farm Management Studies suggest one can observe a correlation between family size and farm size even in India. But as Harrison showed in the Russian context, it is not correlation but the relative size of the change that each element undergoes that is more important.

(2) Simple correlation does not imply that variations in farm size are caused by changes in family size. But Chayanov seems to have taken positive correlation between the two as a proof of that causation.[11]

One may argue equally strongly from the other way round. It may be stressed that it is variations in farm size, more specifically in per capita landholding, which causes the variations in family size. The argument may be further elaborated by saying that the smallest holdings which have very small amounts of land per worker are struggling to make ends meet and are semi-proletarian in nature, as ninety per cent of those impoverished households hire out labour(See Harrison , 1972: tables 4.1,4.2 and 1975:table 6).

Owing to the low level of consumption on such holdings infant mortality is higher,adult life expection is lower and they end up with small families. Harrison takes this point a step further (Harrison, 1975: 401-402). He questions how the poor peasant families can expand their reproducible assets over the family cycle when they start the cycle from a disadvantageous position? He starts his argument by taking the case of a younger nuclear family. He assumes it to be a poor family. When this family has children its consumption needs will go up. And increased consumer demand will immediately conflict with the increased investment required to bring family resources into balance with family requirements in the future.And this crisis, though universal, will be more severe for the poorer families. So it is hard to see internal accumulation as a source of complementary factors for the growth of smaller farms. And in that sense the Chayanovian idea of life cycle seems not to operate.

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[11] Chayanov also supports this by arguing that sown area is not a given constant for the individual farm (as it can be varied by resorting to rental market) but family size and family growth are the independent variables (as the family grows, the farm takes in more land from the rental market and family labour force can exploit the increased sown area subsequently) (Harrison, 1975: 399).

At the other extreme are the largest holdings which are mainly rich peasants in class terms, for they have high per capita land endowment, over 75 percent of them hire in labour, and over and above they have sufficient per capita consumption, and can afford to raise larger families. Thus larger farms have greater economic strength. Thus the Chayanovian assertions of family size as the independent variable does not appear to be tenable.

(3) Chayanov's second statistical exercise also appears to be inconsistent. This statistical exercise brings dynamic information into the Chayanovian scenario of so-called 'demographic differentiation'. According to Chayanov, households should acquire more land and move up into higher sown area groups as their family size expands, while some households with grown up children would tend to subdivide and move into lower sown-area groups. The table (1 - 10) cited by Chayanov (1966 :67) apparently supports this hypothesis. But the fact remains that the exercise was done with the data relating to commune area alone. This is not a typical phenomenon and one cannot generalize a hypthesis based on this highly specific situation. The criterion on which the 'repartitional commune area' or allotment area was periodically distributed by the 'mir' (co-operative) among peasants in those areas where the practice still prevailed was precisely the egalitarian one of the family size.

At the turn of the century, only about 42% (Patnaik, 1979: 183) of the area operated by peasants was in fact 'repartitional communal area' and the percentage was decreasing consistently. The decreasing importance of the allotment area was a result of the extensive purchase and leasing in of landlord's land, which was concentrated in the hands of the rich peasants. Moreover, the allotment area itself was the object of leasing, and here again the leased in allotment area was in the hands of the rich peasants (see Lenin, 1977a: 104). As the purchased and rented land was concentrated with minority rich peasants, the over-all distribution of land in use was highly concentrated despite the relative equality of allotment component.

But it seems that Chayanov ignored this fact. He based his whole argument on the total operated area which by definition (by "force of law") varied according to family size. Patnaik accuses Chayanov of not only ignoring a large component of the operated area (which did not fit into his theory) but also criticises him for ignoring the fact that equal distribution was institutionally maintained. Thus this could not be taken as proof of an autonomous demographic differentiation mechanism.

Chayanov claimed that 'communal repartition' was the agrarian regime for Russia during that period. Patnaik disagrees with Chayanov on this point as well. She argues that the communally held land of the (increasingly weakening) "mir" existed side by side with private property, purchase and sale for a full three decades or more before Chayanov wrote; and that the communally-held land was itself the object of mortgage and leasing. Also, after the 1906 Decree of Stolypin, people could withdraw their land from the communal arrangements. Further, far from adjusting farm size to family size (as Chayanov would expect) the purchase and renting of land by peasants served to worsen considerably the distribution of per capita landholding.

So both Harrison and Patnaik find that the empirical evidence on which Chayanov based his theory of 'demographic differentiation' was not always reliable. They, and a few others, even question Chayanov's conceptual categories and theoretical premises.

Chayanov uses 'family farm' or 'family labour farm' as the basic conceptual category in his theory. This as we have seen earlier is an agricultural production unit in which a certain area of land (held through commune, owned or rented) and means of production are possessed by the family which does not hire any outside labour and works the land with family labour alone for the sole purpose of satisfying consumption needs. Chayanov argues that no class other than that constituted by the family farms, exists within the peasantry:

the latter is conceived of as a more or less perfectly homogeneous entity. His vision of the peasantry is that of a completely undifferentiated one. They never enter into any kind of relationship either internally or externally. In his general essay 'on the Theory of Non-Capitalist Economic Systems' Chayanov goes on to construct the 'peasant economy' - which is made up of innumerable such economically viable family labour farms (see Chayanov, 1966). To take the family as a basic analytical unit is to encompass the conceptional dissolution of internal social relations - the domination of some family members by others on lines of age and sex. The unitary conception of the family economy means that one abstracts from the national economy and analyses the family farm as an enterprise unaffected by wage category, wage labour and family markets.[12] Only by abstracting the family unit from both internal and external social relations was it possible to generate the notion that 'peasant economy' resulted not from exploitation (of some by others) but from 'self-exploitation' of family as a whole. Harrison has made a useful critique of this notion of the 'peasant economy' (Harrison, 1977b: 330).

Littlejohn goes a step further and finds the notion of demographic differentiations as against social differentiation a little absurd:

> The absurdity of treating demographic differentiation as an alternative to social (i.e. class) differentiation can be seen if one supposes that family labour farms were to become the sole form of agriculatural production (either in the Soviet Union or, if there were no political obstacles, in the world as a whole). In that case, the

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12 But Kubanon argued that the family farm was not a harmonious unit composed of individuals striving for a common cause in Russia during the period about which Chayanov was writing. Friction was inherent in both the economic and social relations within a farming family (Soloman, 1977; 130-131).

> rising population and a finite land area, the point would ultimately be reached where it was technically impossible to establish new farms for new families, since the land area would be too small to sustain them on the basis of the established conditions of production. In such an ultimate case, demographic differentiation would by itself lead to the creation of a class of landless peasants. In the absence of capitalism, they would not become landless wage labourers, but it is difficult to see how Chayanov could avoid calling this social differentiation. (Littlejohn, 1977: footnote 17 p. 154-155)

But not all of the critics have treated Chayanove so ruthlessly. While critising the basic premises of Chayanov's theory of the peasant economy, many of the critics did not fail to acknowledge the contribution of Chayanov in the peasant studies. Millar is one such critic:

> Whatever may be the case regarding the design of an alternative theoretical explanation of Chayanov's data, it is obvious that his careful and detailed description of the Russian peasant economy is important in its own right and that it has significant implications for a number of subjects of contemporary interest. (Millar, 1970: 228)

Even Harrison did not hesitate to acknowledge the contribution made by Chayanov in the peasant studies (1975: 414; 1976: 335). Hunt's (1979) treatment of Chayanov is even more sympathetic and she makes a good attempt to test his theory in the African context. We will examine her work more in the next chapter.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

From our discussion so far, we can now sum up the main contrasting points that emerged from the debate on differentiation of the peasantry:

1. The Leninist school of thought did not recognise a homogeneous rural society. In terms of all economic, social and political indicators rural society essentially revealed inequality and conflict of interests. By contrast, the Neo-populist or Chayanovian

school assumed an undifferentiated peasant society where inequality was normally absent; or when inequality was present, as being due to temporary demographic factors.

2. The Leninist school presupposed the existence of capitalist production relations and also a commodity production system. It also assumed the presence of wage labourers. Chayanov, on the contrary, assumed that the economic unit was a farmer who was neither a capitalist nor a labourer and who did not produce to sell and/or to earn profit. The chief motive of production was self-consumption or subsistence. He presupposed a family labour farm (or peasant) economy.

3. The Leninist school asserted that as time passed the rich would become richer and the poor poorer. Furthermore, with the passage of time, the middle group of the peasantry would disintegrate and would join either of the two groups. The Chayanovian school argued that generally 'rich' (by definition big) families would disintegrate and turn into poor (and by definition small) families; while the 'poor' families would turn into 'rich' over time. Thus they had a cyclical mobility schema in their mind.

4. The Leninist school argued that large-scale capitalist farms were more viable than small-scale family farms. The Chayanovian school argued that small-scale family farms were more viable and stable than large-scale capitalist farms.

5. The Leninist school argued that a small farmer with surplus labour in relation to his land and capital was forced to hire himself out as a wage labourer and in this way turned into a semi-proletarian. The Chayanovian school assumed that land and other inputs could be easily leased or bought by the small farmers in order to match his surplus labour. So a small farmer was generally not forced to sell

labour.[13]

6. The Leninist school assumed that the development of capitalism in the non-agricultural sector attracted the surplus labour from the agricultural sector. The Chayanovian school assumed on the other hand, the complete absence or insignificant presence of the non-agricultural sector. The Chayanovian economy was primarily dependent on family labour activities.

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13. Lenin believed that the poor peasant might survive for a certain period not because of his superiority over large-scale farming but because of over-work and under consumption. Actually often the standard of living of the poor peasant was worse than that of the pure rural proletariat (Lenin, 1975, Vol 5: 194-205)

CHAPTER III

APPLICABILITY OF THE DIFFERENTIATION DEBATE

In the last chapter, we have examined in detail the contrasting views on the differentiation of the peasantry in Russia from an historical perspective. In the course of considering the debate, we have also mentioned in brief the attempts made by a number of contemporary scholars to add their ideas on the issue and to operationalize the concepts of both schools (Leninist and Chayanovian) with the aim of applying them in the specific context of present-day Third World countries. Here in this chapter, we will first make a critical review of this work and then identify the major hypotheses that emerge from it. We will then modify the original hypotheses of Lenin and Chayanov in the light of these new studies. The hypotheses will then be formulated in testable form and later tested in the context of the Bangladesh peasantry. We will primarily depend on the data collected in two villages of Bangladesh during our recent field work.

Let us first look into the methodological developments of the Chayanovian school and those of the Leninist school. In the first case, besides Chayanov, we will specifically examine the work of Thorner (1968), Shanin (1972, 1980) and Hunt (1979) in some detail to work out testable hypotheses on demographic differentiation. In the second case, besides Lenin, we will look into the work of Mao Tse Tung (1967), Utsa Patnaik (1976, 1979), Byres (1981) etc. in order to arrive at the testable hypotheses on social differentiation of the peasantry. In both cases, we will bear in mind the exciting exchanges that took place between the Agrarian Marxists and the Neo-populist in post-Revolution Russia.

A: THE METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF THE CHAYANOVIAN SCHOOL OF THOUGHT:

A1: THORNER'S REDEFINITION:

Besides publishing Chayanov's The Theory of Peasant Economy in 1966 in collaboration with other scholars Daniel Thorner himself made an

attempt to redefine the Chayanovian category of peasant family farm to make it applicable in a contemporary Third World economy (Thorner, 1968: 508). Thorner thought complete absence of wage labour (as stressed by Chayanov) was too much an abstraction in the context of contemporary Third World peasantry. He, therefore, extended the Chayanovian definition to include peasant households which do hire in outside labour provided the extent of such hiring is less than the number of days worked by family workers.

But this fundamental abstraction also implies several modifications in the over-all analytical framework of Chayanov. However, it seems that Thorner and many of his followers did not pay enough heed to these implications. Thus new meanings have been superimposed on the old conclusions. He tries to replace the Chayanovian category of 'peasant economy' with 'society predominantly peasant' in nature. While the former is an abstract analytical category (used to mean a complete economic system) the latter is an empirical descriptive term. As such there has arisen an analytical inconsistency. The five macro features in term of production, population, area etc, as proposed by Thorner, appear too naive and simplistic to add any methodological rigour to the Chayanovian school of thought.

A2: SHANIN'S MOBILITY SCHEMA:

Shanin's work (1972, 1980) provides valuable additions to the methodological developments of the Chayanovian school. His Awkward Class (Shanin, 1972) ably demonstrates how profoundly he has been influenced by Chayanov. In a recent paper (Hobsbawm et al: 1980) he once again reveals his standing vis-a-vis this debate. In this paper shanin makes an attempt to compare the empirical work on differentiation in Russia of the 1920s and India of the 1970s hoping to operationalize the concepts relating to the measurement of capitalism. He portrays the methodological developments that took place in Russia of the 1920s but fails when he discuss the work on contemporary Indian peasantry. He takes up only one piece of work - that of Utsa Patnaik (1976) where an attempt has been made to find a criterion (called the E-criterion) whereby one can differentiate the peasantry in order to make his comparison. As is

well known, a lively debate has taken place on the Indian mode of production, (see for example, Sau, 1973, 1976; Rudra, 1970, Patnaik, 1972, 1976; Chattapadhya, 1972; Banaji, 1972 and a host of others) and if one wants to compare the Indian researches with those of the Russia, one must have a thorough grasp over these works. It is because of this lack of rigour that Byres finds it:

> ..... to be a hopelessly unbalanced comparison - indeed, not a comparison at all, for it consists of consideration, itself inadquate, of a single article by Utsa Patnaik, against which are juxtaposed the ideas of an army of Russians. (Byres, 1980: 1310)

Moreover, Shanin's comments on Patnaik's work at times misses the target. Shanin makes the following comments on Patnaik:

(i) There is a multiplicity of indices rather than a single labour exploitation criterion.

(ii) Patnaik discards the activities of moneylenders and traders.

(iii) Patnaik uses existing data, collected wtihout any concern with peasant differentiation and exploitation.

Byres in his review article, discards most of Shanin's accusations against Patnaik and concludes, "the critique of Patnaik is not a valid one" (Byre, 1980; 1311). This is because Patnaik was explicitly clear about these limitations and she is aware of the role of the usurious capital in the differentiation of the peasantry (which she ably demonstrated in her earlier work, 1972). And there is no rational basis for claiming that Marxist ideas are always to be tested with the help of data collected with Marxist questions in mind.

In the Russian context Shanin provides a useful review of the 1920s debate, but ignores Lenin's classic 'Development of Capitalism in Russia' on differentiation. Lastly, Shanin makes a few suggestions for operationalizing the catefories used by the Russian scholars to understand the rural society of a developing country.

The main thrust of his argument is as follows:

> "To study a process one must establish the methodology directly relevant to change i.e. to overcome both the inherent static bias of the ordinary census and the in-built descriptive narrowness of monographic studies" (Shanin in Hobsbawm et al, 1980: 103)

He then provides his final suggestion that dynamic study and budget study can offer a methodological tool to operationalize these concepts and may be used on massive empirical data.

There is one interesting aspect to such a suggestion. Shanin himself has used these dynamic studies and budget studies (Shanin; 1972) and has formulated his famous concept of cyclical mobility finding some historic link with the work of Chayanov. In his own words:

> "Chayanov seems to have retained the essence of his views about the crucial influence of 'biological' factors, on the Russian peasant economy of this period and, more important, for us here, (emphasis mine), fully rest ated in his later studies initial explanation of peasant socio-economic mobility" (Shanin, 1972 :107)

Shanin also discovers that budget studies empirically validated the general theory of Chayanov's peasant economy and mobility (Shanin, 1972: 105). Shanin, although quite subtle, ultimately goes all the way to prove that class differentiation did not really exist in Russia during the period about which the Chayanovian school was talking. A brief look into his mobility schema at once reveals that Shanin's ideas are deeply rooted in the Neo-populist ideas of the Chayanovian era of Russia. So one must take his suggestions for concentrating on budget Studies and dynamic Studies in order to understand differentiation of the peasantry in the contemporary Third World with a pinch of salt. This is because there is an inherent bias in such studies towards 'levelling off' of differences. Let us first briefly examine Shanin's ideas before we make further comments.

Shanin's (1972) Awkward Class touches upon two important problems - i.e. the problem of collectivisation and the problem of the relationship between communists and the peasants, and this forms the background for his mobility thesis. Shanin's thesis is that the communists of the USSR during this period committed three grave mistakes: i.e. they:

(i) over estimated the class differences in the countryside;

(ii) failed to take into account the peculiar cohesiveness of a general peasant culture associated with the long tradition of the repartitional commune system .

(iii) failed to recognize the high incidence of multidirectional and cyclical mobility which effectively prevented class crystalization in the countryside, since relative stability of the membership of different classes is a prerequisite for the development of class consciousness and class conflict.

As a result of these mistakes the communists at last had to resort to forced collectivization, which, according to Shanin could have been avoided.

Then he presents his famous dynamic mobility study of the Ryssian peasantry. Here Shanin examines the dynamic studies carried out by N. Chernenkov, G. Kushchenko, (also mentioned in Chayanov's works) and all such works carried out in Russia during the last decade of the 19th and first two decades of the 20th centuries. The evidence gathered in these decades of dynamic studies proved that:

> A complex multidirectional mobility, involving both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies simultaneously operating among peasant households, is, therefore, at work and underlies the gross differentiation process in peasant society (Shanin, 1972: 74)

The anti-Lenin hypothesis of centripetal mobility was the key premise of all of Shanin's later arguments. Thus Shanin carefully tries to substantiate this tendency by discovering certain stable casual forces working behind such a process. According to Shanin those

casual forces were:

(i) By partitioning the big farms were moving downward. This enhanced the process of equalization or levelling.

(ii) The disappearance or migration of the small farmers was relatively greater. Thus it produced a false picture of equality.

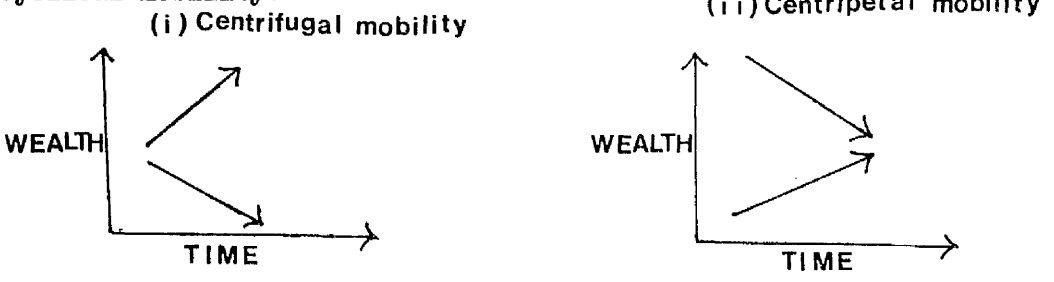
(iii) Sometimes small farmers merged together and moved upward. This also enhanced the levelling mechanism.

(iv) Redivision of the land administered by the peasant commune on the basis of an egalitarian principle of family size also enhanced the levelling mechanism.

(v) The natural growth of the young peasant family put the pressure of increased consumption needs on the male workers of the family. The degree of self-exploitation and the pooling in of further factors of production is made in response to such pressures. Thus the young and poor families experience upward mobility. At a certain stage consumers turn into workers and the c/w ratio decreases and thereby also decreases the drive for economic expansion. Moreover partitioning of such matured families causes a downward mobility again, thus this biological life cycle also naturally enhances the centripetal mobility.[1]

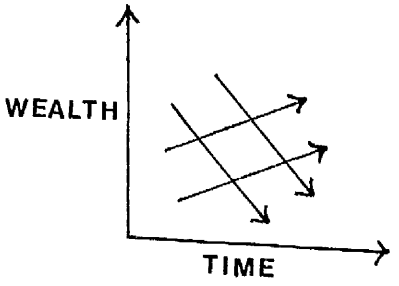
But side by side there works the economic mechanism of centrifugal mobility as well.

According to Shanin these two opposing trends ultimately result in cyclical mobility.

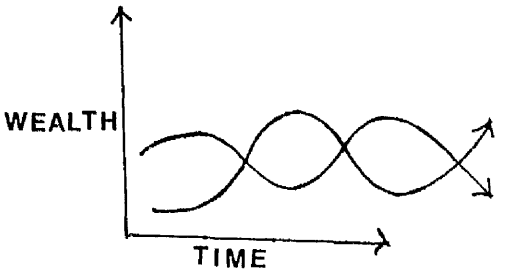


1 One should note the striking similarities between these and the Chayanovian arguments on demographic differentiation (see Chapter 2).

(iii) Multidirectional mobility



(iv) Cyclical mobility



One can clearly observe from the above diagrams that a cyclical mobility model may really conceal the class differences that exist in a peasantry. By contrast, it puts more emphasis on the non-socio-economic factors (such as partition, inheritance, population growth, migration, merger, extinction etc) which diffuse on class antogonism. After carefully examining the work of Shanin, Littlejohn argues:

> "it is clear that he (Shanin) is only able to treat the peasantry as one class" (Littlejohn, 1973: 119)

A3: HUNT'S APPLICATION:

Diana Hunt makes a most useful attempt to apply some of the key ideas of Chayanov in the context of the African peasantry (Hunt, 1979). Although she primarily deals with the 'Chayanovian model of peasant household resource allocation' in the specific context of Mbere in Eastern Kenya, she has also examined the applicability of Chayanov's theory of demographic differentiation. She has done this by correlating farm size and family size, consumer-worker ratio (she calls it 'producer-consumer ratio') and output per worker per hour, the 'producer-worker ratio' and per capita income etc. Given the abundance of land and near natural economy of Eastern Kenya with little or no wage labour, she has, in most cases, obtained a positive correspondence between Chayanovian hypotheses and her findings. But in some cases the results varied widely.

It is unlikely that we will get a similar correspondence in the context of Bangladesh villages (where land is very scarce and most of the poor households depend on wage earning), nevertheless, Hunt's methods of data collection and their application may be quite useful. We will use her work extensively while working out the testable hypotheses for Bangladesh.

B: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LENINIST METHODS OF DIFFERENTIATION:

B1: MAO'S 'HOW TO DIFFERENTIATE CLASSES' (HDC):

Mao Tse Tung, while making a contribution towards developing the Marxist concept of differentiation of the peasantry in the sepcific context of China in the 1920s wrote his famous article, "How to Differentiate Classes" in 1926 (Mao, 1967). The Chinese Communist Party used his categorizations extensively while formulating and implementing the Land Reform programmes (Hinton, 1964). Mao distinguishes more than two types of inhabitants (bourgeoisie and proletariat) in rural China of the 1930s and finds intermediate links between these classes. In fact, Lenin[2] himself revised his 'two classes' thesis (as propounded in DCR) on differentiation and Mao seems to have been inspired by that line of argument.

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[2] Lenin argued that the net results of differentiation have to be placed in the context of the intermediate links and the starting point of the process is the emergence of property inequality, In 1920, Lenin presented his famous Preliminary Draft Thesis (PDT) on the Agrarian Question (Lenin, 1920) and elaborated the intermediate links through characterization of the peasantry, not only for the specific circumstances of Russia but also for the whole of Europe. In PDT Lenin talks about the following classes in the context of European capitalist countries:

(i) First, the agricultural proletariats or wage-labourers (by the year, season or day) who obtain their livelihood by working on hire basis at capitalist agricultural enterprises.

cont'd.....

Mao distinguishes five broad classes in rural China:

(i) The Landlord: A landlord is a person who owns land, does not engage in labour himself or does so only to a very small extent, and lives by exploiting the peasants. The collection of land rent is his main form of exploitation.

(ii) The Rich Peasant: The rich peasant as a rule owns land. But some rich peasants own only part of their land and rent the remainder. Others ..... rent all their land. His main form of exploitation is the hiring of labour ..... A person who owns a fair amount of good land, farms some of it himself without hiring labour, but exploits other peasants by means of land rent, interest or in other ways, shall also be treated as rich peasant.

(iii) The Middle Peasant: Many middle peasants own land. Some own part of their land and rent the rest. Others ..... rent all their land. A middle peasant derives his income wholly or mainly from his own labour. As a rule he does not exploit others and in many cases he himself is exploited by others..... Some middle peasants (the well-to-do middle peasants) do practice exploitation to small extent, but this is not their regular or their main source of income.

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footnote cont'd...

(ii) Second, the semi-proletariats or peasants who till tiny plots of land, i.e. those who obtain their livelihood partly as wage-labourers..... and partly by working on their own or rented plots of land, which provide their families only with a part of their means of subsistence.

(iii) Third, the small peasantry i.e. the small-scale tillers who, either as owners or tenants, hold small plots of land, which enable them to satisfy the needs of their families and their farms, and do not hire outside labour.

(iv) In the economic sense, one should understand by 'middle peasants' those small farms who either as owners or tenants hold plots of land that are small but under capitalism, sufficient to provide them with a meagre subsistence for the family and the bare minimum needed to maintain the farm. It can also produce

cont'd.....

(iv) The Poor Peasant: Among the poor peasants some own part of their land..... others own no land at all but only a few odd farm implements. As a rule poor peasants have to rent the land they work on and are subjected to exploitation, having to pay land rent and interest on loans and to hire themselves out to some extent. In general, a middle peasant does not need to sell his labour power while the poor peasant has to sell part of his labour power.

(v) The Worker: The worker (including the farm labour) as a rule owns no land or farm implements, though some do own a very small amount of land and very few farm implements. Workers make their living wholly or mainly by selling their labour power.

B2: PATNAIK'S E-CRITERION:

Patnaik notes one interesting point of difference between Lenin's PDT and Mao's HDC formulations:

> In the first, labour hiring is taken as the only main index for differentiating classes within the peasantry, and it is specified that the holding may be either owned or tenanted. In the second, however, along with labour hiring, rent exploitation (and indeed also loan interest) is explicity included in differentiating classes. We believe that the reason for difference is the following: in the context of the European capitalist countries to which his PDT refers, rent exploitation by landlords, still remained as a feudal hangover, affected all sections of the peasantry and therefore was not germane to the question of differentiation within the peasantry. This was a result of developing capitalist relations, i.e. of labour hiring alone. In the Chinese context, however, extraction of rent and loan interest (besides labour hiring) by richer sections of the peasantry itself from poorer ones, was of some importance, and hence, had to be explicitly considered. (Patnaik, 1976: A-88)

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footnote cont'd...

a certain surplus which may in good years at least be converted in capital.

(v) The big peasants are capitalist entrepreneurs in agriculture, who as a rule employ several hired labourers and are connected with the 'peasantry' only in their low cultural level, habits of life and the manual labour they themselves perform on their farm.

cont'd.....

Keeping in mind, the differences, Patnaik (1976: A-83), makes an attempt to define the differentiation and later operationalize the concept in terms of her labour exploitation criterion (E-Criterion) with a view to using it in the specific historical context of a Third World country (like India). Patnaik says:

> By 'Economic differentiation' we refer to the fact that there is no single homogeneous type of holding with respect to the way production activity is organised, which may be taken as a 'representative' type. On the contrary, the very fact of concentration of means of production implies that there must be qualitatively distinct types of holdings which differ in the way their production activity is organised. A minority of households have so much resources relative to family size that they cannot cultivate with family labour alone but must rely primarily on the labour of others. At the other pole a large proportion of households - which may be the majority, have so little resources relative to the working capacity and consumption needs of the family that they must rely primarily on working for others in some form or another. Furthermore, these different types of holdings enter into relation with each other in the production process through labour hiring and land leasing.
>
> The Marxist position is that economic classes are to be looked at in terms of the above two related criteria: possession of the means of production, and the exploitation of labour. (Patnaik, 1976: A-83)

Patnaik herself uses the labour exploitation criterion (or E-vriterion) for classifying peasants in terms of a labour exploitation ratio. The labour exploitation ratio is calculated by the following formula:

$$E = x/y$$

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footnote cont'd...

(vi) The big landowners, who, in capitalist countries - directly or through their tenant farmers - systematically exploit wage-labour and the neighbouring small (and, not infrequently, part of the middle) peasantry, do not themselves engage in manual labour, and are in the main descended from feudal lords.

where x_j is defined as net total use of outside and y is the family labour days expended in cultivation on the operational holding. The term x may be further elaborated as follows:

x = Net labour days hired in [Labour hired in (a_1) - labour hired out (a_2)]

+ Net labour days appropriated through rent [labour days taken through rent (b_1) - labour days given through rent (b_2)]

That means: $x = a + b$

$= (a_1 - a_2) + (b_1 - b_2)$

b_1 and b_2 may be operationalised as follows:

$b_1 = r_1$ (total labour days on land leased out)
$b_2 = r_2$ (total labour days on leased in land)

Where r_1 = rental share to owner of land leased out.
r_2 = rental share to owner of land leased in.

Patnaik then uses her E-criterion to classify the peasantry. She, however, distinguishes two types of exploitation. For some landowners and cultivators x will be positive and very high. They are mainly enjoying other's labour. Some will have the 'a' component predominant, and they are the capitalist type of labour exploiter. While some others will show the predominance of the 'b' component which implies the landlord type of labour exploiter.

Another group of peasants will show a high negative value of the x component implying that they are either agricultural labour (if 'a' predominates) or petty tenants (if 'b' predominates).

For a middle category or primarily self-employed cultivators x will be relatively small in absolute value or it might be zero. That is either these cultivators will not be involved in exploitation at all, or they will be involved either way to a very minor extent.

Her schema may be presented as follows:

SCHEMA - I

Economic class	Empirical Defining characteristic	Remarks
1. Landlord	$E \longrightarrow \infty$	x Positive and very high, y zero
2. Rich peasant	$E \gg +I$	x Positive and high y positive, $x \gg y$
3. Middle peasant	$+1 > E > -1$	divisible into
i) Upper Middle	$+1 > E > 0$	x positive but small y positive, $x < y$
ii) Lower Middle	$+1 > E > -1$	x zero or negative but small y positive, $\|x\| < \|y\|$
4. Poor peasant	$E \ll -1$	x negative and high y positive, $\|x\| \gg \|y\|$
5. Full time labourer	$E \longrightarrow -\infty$	x negative and very high y zero

Source: Patnaik,1976: A-85.

The empirical characterisation of Patnaik's schema is as follows:

SCHEMA - II

Empirical Characteristics		Remarks
1. Landlord:		
(a) Capitalist	$a > b$	Labour hiring greater than rent.
(b) Feudual	$a \ll b$	Labour hiring at most as high as rent.
2. Rich peasants:		
(a) Proto-bourgeois	$a > b$	Labour hiring greater than rent.
(b) Proto-feudual	$a \ll b$	Labour hiring at most as high as rent.
3. Poor peasant:		
(a) Agricultural labourer operating land.	$\|a\| > \|b\|$	Hiring out greater than rent payment.
(b) Petty tenant	$\|a\| \ll \|b\|$	Hiring out at most as high as rent payment.
4. Full time labourer	$b = 0$	Hiring out only form, no rent payment.

Source: Patnaik 1976: A-87

While operationalizing the concepts, Patnaik is aware of the limitations of the Indian case, where the extent of development of capitalism is quite small compared to the European case about which Lenin was talking in his PDT. Patnaik is also aware of the Chinese case, where the extent of capitalism was even smaller compared to contemporary India. She also generates some ideas about the possible cases of inconsistency that may arise while applying the concept. A widow who applies no family labour and hires in some labour may be classed as a landlord, although by any criterion she is very poor. Again, when there is a high degree of mechanisation, a capitalist, may attract the categorization of 'middle peasant'. And, where will one put money lenders in the spectrum of Patnaik's class differentiation? It also fails to take account of the technical part of production. Patnaik, however, has an argument. In her own words, her criterion:

> does not give an exhaustive coverage of all agrarian relations but only those arising directly in the production process; and the rationale for this is that other relations such as those between the trader and the money lender on the one hand and different classes within the peasantry, are themselves conditional upon the existence of class differentiation arising out of the production process. (Patnaik, 1976, A-90)

However, there are a number of problems with the direct method of differentiating the peasantry. It is very difficult to collect accurate data, especially on the labour hired in/out for a whole year through the conventional methods of data collection. One has to take into account the everyday movement of not only the family labourers hour by hour, but also the hired in labourers. The irregular character of labour hiring, existence of a number of hiring arrangements, lack of book-keeping at the households level present severe constraints on collection of data on labour exploitation. If someone is determined, he can concentrate only on a handful of households and collect this information. Even in that ca se one has to visit households every day. Even if one were to take pains to collect labour exploitation information with such rigour, one will only come out with a partial class analysis. This is because Patnaik's E-criterion has concerned itself only with the

agricultural aspect of the status of the household. But an agricultural household may have more than one occupations. In that case Patnaik's E-criterion fails to take account of labour exploitations in those non-agricultural occupations. It is only applicable in case where agriculture is the only occupation of the household concerned (Adnan et al, 1977: 36). Also, Patnaik assumes the same productivity for hired and family labour. But in reality this does not always hold good. It will be wise, therefore, to combine this method of differentiation with other methods in order to make a comprehensive class analysis. Lenin himself, in his work, has left enough indication regarding the multidimensional approach of differentiation. Moreover, Patnaik, has so far talked about economic differentiation only. But economic differentiation is not the last word in the Marxist way of looking into the concept of differentiation. Byres takes up this point and goes further (Byres, 1981).

B3: BYRE'S EXPOSITION OF CLASS-IN-ITSELF AND CLASS-FOR-ITSELF:

According to Byres, economic differentiation creates the ground for social differentiation which entails how class-in-itself changes into class-for-itself (Byres, 1981: 424).

In Byres' words:

> The notion of class-in-itself, which has been said to embody the hard core of class [Westegard and Resler, 1976: 2-3], concentrates one's attention upon the structural formation. These involve men and women with a common relationship to the means of production, a common means of surplus product, and a common relationship, therefore, to one another; these relationships giving rise to an objectively given, common set of economic interests vis-a-vis other classes (other interests). Class-for-itself, on the other hand, entails a perception of these interests, and a willingness and a capacity to pursue them through organised, collective activity (class action), and it directs the analysis towards ideas, institutional forms, behaviour and the possibility of struggle. The crucial mediating element between class-in-itself and class-for-itself is class consciousness, which transforms the former into the latter, though never in a mechanical way. (Byres, 1981: 407)

Hence a comprehensive discussion on differentiation of the peasantry should take into account this process of transformation of one into the other - their ramifications, how far they are likely to go, their manifestations in a concrete situation (Byres,1982: 408). There are, no doubt, a number of difficulties in making an attempt of that nature. Only those engaged in concrete political practice are placed in a unique position to comprehend such processes. An academic can only make rough approximation of the reality which is undergoing change. Nevertheless, an analysis of this kind is necessary if a full understanding of the processes of change is sought.

We have so far discussed in detail the attempts made by different scholars to operationalize the concepts relating to differentiation of the peasantry and their limitations. Now we are in a position to identify some hypotheses from both Chayanovian and Leninist ideas (including the later methodological developments on them) with a view to testing them empirically for Bangladesh. We will use the data collected on two villages during our fieldwork for this purpose[3].

We will first work out the Chayanovian hypotheses followed by Leninist ones.

TESTABLE HYPOTHESES:

A: CHAYANOVIAN HYPOTHESES:

We have primarily depended on Chayanov's own work (1966), the works of Shanin (1972, 1980), Harrison (1975) and Hunt (1979), in formulating Chayanovian hypotheses on demographic differentiation.

Hypothesis 1: Peasant households do not employ wage-labour. Hunt modifies this hypothesis by framing it as 'dominance of the non-wage family economic unit' (Hunt: 1979: 276) in the African context. This may also be applicable to Bangladesh.

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[3] The criteria of selection of the villages, methods and limitations of data collection have been discussed in Appendix A.

2. One of the key elements of Chayanovian theory is the independence of consumption and production decisions. So, the motive behind production organisation by an individual family unit is not profit-maximisation but establishing and maintenance of the labour-consumer (or subsistence) balance. Hunt redefines it by saying 'it is impossible to calculate profit according to capitalist formula' (Hunt, 1979: 276) as there is no wage system.

3. Land is in flexible supply to all households (through rent and/or communal repartition) (Hunt, 1979: 248).

The three hypotheses formulated so far will give a general idea of the peasant economy as analysed by Chayanov.

Once the general nature of the economy is established, we will move to the specific hypotheses relating to demographic differentiation.

4. For each household family size influences the size of the cultivated area (i.e. operated area) (Hunt, 1979: 276). The direction of the causality is from family size to farm size. More specifically, the amount of sown area (in Bangladesh case, operated area) shall directly vary with the size of the family. Couching in Chayanovian terminology, the correlation between the operated area and consumer-worker (c/w) ratio shall be positive.

5. For each household the c/w ratio influences the hours worked per adult. In other words with increase in c/w ratio , hours worked per adult also increases.

6. Hypothesis 5 may also be re-emphasised in the following way: With the increase in c/w ratio, output/acre also increases (as with the increase in the number of consumers the workers available in a family work harder i.e. their self-exploitation increases).

7. Similarly, with the increase in c/w ratio, output/worker shall also increase.

8. For each household the c/w ratio determines the value of total output per capita. In other words with the increase in c/w ratio, agricultural income per capita shall also increase.

9. The family life cycle influences the relative wealth of a family. Thus, a nuclear family grows in size over time faces disadvantages initially. But as the children grow up and help the parents in agricultural activities the position improves. So the years of existence of a family (we call it the age of family) shall have some relationship with the c/w ratio at any point in time. Families in existence for smaller number of years shall tend to have higher c/w ratio and families in existence for greater number shall tend to have lower c/w ratio (but up to a point, after which c/w ratio tends to decline as growp up children will leave the parents and set up their own families). The latter part of the hypothesis will explain the dynamic argument of Chayanov on differentiation.

10. Shanin, while extending the Chayanovian views on differentiation, hypothesises a peasantry in complete fluidity. Rich families are becoming poor over time by partitioning and other demographic processes and poor families are becoming rich as their family sizes increases. In other words, in accordance with Shanin's hypothesis, a group of peasants cannot stay long enough in the same position of the social ladder to consolidate as a class entity. The population pressure, law of inheritance, migration, partition etc. always divide a household and its duration in the same position is always under attack.

To test Shanin's hypothesis a kind of mobility matrix showing land ownership or control for different periods for the peasant households may have to be constructed.

B: LENINIST HYPOTHESES ON CLASS DIFFERENTIATION

Leninist hypotheses on the differentiation of the peasantry may be formulated as follows:

1. That the control over the means of production at a point in time is distributed very unequally

2. That the concentration in the ownership of means of production (especially land) would have been getting worse over time.

3. Concomitantly with the differences and concentration of material elements of production, one shall observe differences in techniques of production, income and expenditure pattern, food intake and standard of living, extent of market participation and any other aspects connected with such differences.

4. Differences in the distribution of material elements of production shall have roots in social relations of production and exchanges - particularly in the over time tenural arrangements, usurious capital, market relations etc.

5. The Leninist view requires that the extent of labour exploitation and impoverishment shall increase as the pace of differentiation increases. So one would expect the following:

   (i) Resumption of operated land by the rich farmers from tenants.
   (ii) Dispossession of the small and marginal farmers.
   (iii) Growth of wage labour, especially worker 'novice'.
   (iv) Movement from 'bonded' to 'free' labour.
   (v) Development of class consciousness.
   (vi) From class-in-itself to class-for-itself changes.

6. The state shall get increasingly involved in displaceing the poorer peasantry and helping the processes of concentration in the hands of a few. This will be an extension of the Leninist analysis of the differentiation.

CHAPTER IV
AGRARIAN STRUCTURE AND INEQUALITY IN BANGLADESH: A MACRO OVERVIEW

This chapter is primarily based on macro-level published statistics. It examines the gradual evolution of agrarian relations in rural Bangladesh since the 1940s with a particular emphasis on the situation of ever increasing poverty and inequality.

1. THE BENGAL PEASANTRY DURING THE LAST DAYS OF THE BRITISH RULE:

A close examination of the available statistics suggests that during the British period the peasantry in Bengal was differentiated and that there was a significant presence of surplus Muslim raiyats, although their proportions varied from region to region. Due to the presence of a 'surplus' group of raiyats in secure tenancy, and a host of middlemen[1] in between the Zamindars and actual tillers, there always existed extra pressures on the working peasantry and a number of avenues were open for exploitation of the peasantry: in particular through money lending, trading and rack-renting interests. All these affected the stability of the agrarian peasantry and caused the peasantry to disintegrate. Thus by 1938 the Floud Commission bore witness to a highly disintegrated and unequal peasantry in Bengal. The Commission considered five acres of land as the minimum size of an economic holding (GOB, 1940:86) and a substantial number of people were by then found to be below the subsistance level. A sample survey of 19,599 households organised by the commission in 1938 found that about $\frac{3}{4}$th(74.6%) of the total households in rural Bengal had holdings below the subsistence level (i.e. 5 acres) and only 25.4% had more than 5 acres of land, (GOB, 1940: Vol II , Appendix IX, Table VIII b). Going into further detail, it was found that as high as 45.8% of the households had less than 2 acres of land and only 7.7% of households had holdings which were more than 10 acres of land.

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[1] The Land Revenue Commission (henceforth, the Floud Commission) reports as many as 50 sub-infeudatory interests on land in some cases (see the Report of the Land Revenue Commission: Bengal, 1940, Vol I: 37).

Compared to the overall distribution noted above, regional distributions were much more striking. Table 4.1 below brings out the regional variations quite clearly.

TABLE 4.1

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTIONS OF LANDHOLDING BY DISTRICTS: BENGAL 1938-39

Name of districts	% of families		
	More than 2 acres	More than 10 acres	Average acres per family
1. Bakerganj (Barisal)	61.8	1.2	2.17
2. Bogra	34.5	7.1	4.28
3. Chittagong	60.3	4.3	2.45
4. Dhaka	62.4	3.5	2.13
5. Dinajpur	24.2	15.0	6.38
6. Faridpur	81.5	0.6	1.63
7. Jessore	28.5	13.6	4.78
8. Khulna	55.6	7.6	4.78
9. Mymensingh (including Tangail and Jamalpur)	34.1	6.5	3.86
10. Noakhali	65.3	2.8	2.41
11. Pabna	64.1	2.4	2.39
12. Rajshahi	31.8	14.6	5.52
13. Rangpur	24.6	11.2	6.67
14. Tippera (Comilla)	63.9	2.9	2.22
TOTAL	45.8	7.7	4.02

Source: Report of the Land Revenue Commission (Sir Francis Floud, Chairman), Vol.II, Table VIII(c), Bengal Government Press, Alipore, 1940.

We can note the followings from Table 4.1:

1. Districts in the North and West (Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jessore, Rajshahi) fall significantly below the 'less than 2 acres' average (percentages ranging from 24.4 to 31.8). They rise significantly above the 'more than 10 acres' average (percentages ranging from 11.2 to 15.0).

2. Districts in the East and South (Dhaka, Tippera, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Barisal, Khulna) fall even more significantly below the 'less than 2 acres' average (percentages varying from 34.1 to 63.9) and their rise above the 10 acres mark is not always significant (percentages varying from 1.2 to 7.6).

The Commission also noticed wide regional variations in the incidence of landless labourers and share-croppers. The Commission found that the total percentage of families living mainly either as share-croppers or agricultural labourers in 1938-39 was 31%.

The districts which exceeded the average were in order of magnitude: Khulna (55%), Pabna (41%), Faridpur (39%), Dinajpur (37%), Rajshahi (36%) and Rangpur (32%). All of these districts are located on the Western side of the North-South river complex (Brahmaputra - Jamuna - Ganges - Padna - Meghna) and the majority of them (5 out of 7) are in the Rajshahi Division in Northern Bengal. If we consider the Floud Commission data on a regional basis, we find that the landless population (including sharecroppers) ranged between 32-41% in the North Western region of Bengal to 5.9% in Comilla and 13.4% in Chittagong in the East. These figures lend support to the proposition that there was a loose correlation between areas of low landholding size and areas with a smaller proportion of landless families.

The districts in Northern Bengal had not only the greater proportions of sharecroppers and landless agricultural labourers, but the classes of raiyats and tenants were also more differentiated (as we have seen in Table 4.1). The Commission's findings thus lend support to the proposition that 'surplus' Muslim peasants did exist before and during

the emergence of Pakistan.[2] The presence of rich Muslim jotedars in Northern Bengal in the early forties was also supported by Bell (1942). Bell, while writing the settlement Report on Dinajpur noted three-tier agrarian relations in the rural areas. According to Bell, rural Bengal exhibited three distinct classes:[3]

(i) Class I - land owners (Zamindars, Talugdars, Patnidars etc) and rich farmers (Jotedars, Gantidars, Haoladars etc);

(ii) Class II - self sufficient peasants (Raiyats) and

(iii) Class III - Sharecroppers (Bargadars) and agricultural labourers (Krishans)

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[2] The explanation for this regional variation in the extent of differentiation among the raiyat classes in the forties was attributed by Wood (1978) to the historical specificity of the 'border' districts. Wood says:

> The districts were more exposed to the Communal tension which developed as a prelude to the Muslim League's Campaign for a separate Islamic State. Where the Zamindars and Tenure holders were largely Hindu, the communal factor restrained the excesses of Zamindar's oppression over the Muslim tenants (e.g. illegal charges in addition to statutory rent). Thus retaining more surplus at the level of raiyat for accumulation and consolidation of holdings. (Wood: 1978: 6)

[3] In the words of Bell:

> The Agricultural population of the district is scattered over the plains of the district in small villages, and in every village is to be found representatives of three distinct classes. The first of these are the landlords. Though the landlord or even his 'Gomosta' may not be present in every village, yet the land upon which the industry of the village is expanded belongs either to an individual landlord or landlords or to a group of relations who constitute a body of joint

cont'd.....

The differentiated picture of rural Bengal has also been confirmed by Ishaque's plot to plot survey (1944-45) of 5,284 random households in rural Bengal. The survey results have been recalculated by Abdullah (1976) and Abdullah's tables have been recompiled by Hossain (1981). Hossain (ibid) while reorganising Ishaque's (Ishaque: 1946) data concludes that there were only 15.3% of the rural households who owned more than 5.0 acres of land (compared to 25.4% in 1938 as per Floud Commission Report) and they owned more than 60% of the total land. Not only that they share cropped out more than a third of their land, and so their share of cultivated land was not as high as the owned land. They supplied about 78% of total share cropped out land. Sharecroppers on the other hand were mainly the poor. Table 4.2 gives futher details:

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footnote cont'd

> proprietors. Next to them are the pettty farmers or cultivators who constitute the largest of the three classes, these men rent from the landlords small parcels of land over which they usually acquired rights of occupancy. The third and last class is made up of such landless persons, who work as labourers in the fields of their more fortunate neighbours, and such artisans as the carpenter, the blacksmith and the potter, who assist agriculture by making or repairing agricultural tools or supplying the domestic wants of the population. To this class also belong the village servants who perform the menial offices of the village. Although the persons in this last category follow a variety of occupations, the whole class is relatively small, because there are few villages so large as to demand the services of more than one carpenter or potter and the number of landless classes in most villages is absolutely small.(Bell, 1942:80)

TABLE 4.2

PATTERN OF DISTRIBUTION OF LANDOWNERSHIP AND IMPORTANCE OF SHARECROPPING IN 1944 - 45

LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS	% of households	% of land owned	% share of rented out land	% share of rented in land	Owned land share cropped out %	Cultivated land share cropped in %
Own only homestead land or landless	29.9	1.6	nil	26.5	nil	97.3
Own up to 1.0 acres	19.5	4.6	2.9	18.7	15.3	54.3
1.01 to 3.0 acres	25.1	18.5	9.0	29.6	11.8	27.3
3.01 to 5.0 acres	10.3	15.0	9.6	12.9	15.7	16.1
Over 5.0 acres	15.3	60.3	78.4	12.2	36.1	5.5
All households	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	27.0	21.2

Source: Hossain, 1981(table V, p. 19) compiled from Abdullah, 1976 (table VI, p.105).
Original source: Ishaque, H.S.M. , 1946.

Another study by the Indian Statistical Institute (1946) based on a sample survey of 80,000 households, also revealed the unequal agrarian structure prevailing in Bengal during the forties. It found that in rural Bengal only 11.5 per cent of the total households owned 5 acres or more (see Mukherjee, 1957b:footnote 1, P.47). When compared to the findings of the Report of the Land Revenue Commission of 1938, the findings of both Ishaque's survey and Indian Statistical survey point to changes in landholding in rural Bengal leading to its concentration in the hands of a few wealthy people.

Based on these surveys and his own field studies in six villages of Bengal (Mukherjee, 1957a), Mukherjee, like Bell, identifies three recognisable classes of the peasantry in Bengal during the last part of British rule in India[4] (Mukherjee, 1957a). They were:

1. Class I - composed of the landed gentry, viz, the landholders and supervisory farmers i.e. of the subinfeudatory landlords and the prosperous non-cultivating or supervisory farmers. They formed the top most group in the villages.

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4 The three classes have been formed out of the following occupational groups (Mukherjee, 1957b: 7):

1. Landholders are either the subinfeudatory landlords created by the permanent settlement of 1793 or those landowning persons who do not work on their land but let out the holdings for sharecropping for which they receive at least a half share of the crop. In Bengal they are known as Zamindars or Jotedars.

2. Supervisory farmers are those who live by having their land cultivated by hired labourers. They are generally distinguished from the ordinary cultivators by a qualifying prefix of being rich, viz. dhani chasi or grihastha.

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2. Class II - was composed mainly of the self-sufficient peasantry, viz. the cultivators; but artisans and traders were also included in this class. They too, like most of the cultivators, maintained a somewhat self-sufficient existence, partly based on land.

3. Class III - was composed of the remaining occupational groups, viz. the sharecroppers, agricultural labourers, service holders, and others, which were the people who depended on working for others or in case of a few of them, on the charity of the wealthier people.

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footnote cont'd.

3. Cultivators are the self-sufficient peasants who possess tenancy rights over their holdings and cultivate them for themselves.

4. Sharecroppers or bargadars are those who live mainly by tilling others' land on a share-cropping basis. They usually possess a pair of oxen, a plough, and seeds for production, and are thus differentiated from the agricultural labourers, some of whom may be paid by crops instead of cash wages. There is also an important distinction between the two groups in as much as that while the actual earnings of the share-croppers will depend on the total crop produced on the land, the wages of the agricultural labourers (either in cash or in kind) are fixed beforehand.

5. Agricultural labourers or Kisans are those who are paid in wages for their work in agricultural production.

6. Artisans are the rural craftsmen, like weavers, carpenters, potters, blacksmiths, etc, most of whom own their means of production and produce for themselves by their own labour.

7. Traders are generally the petty shopkeepers, maintaining a grocery store or stationery shop in the village or peddlers.

8. Service holders are in the main menial employees of the local government or public organisations or of individual households such as sweeper, messenger, watchmen, domestic servant etc.

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Class I formed the landed gentry and thrived on the concentration of land and use of others' labour. According to a survey of the Indian Statistical Institute (1946), this class formed only 4% of the rural households in Bengal but owned 11% of the total land.

Class II composed of mainly self-sufficient and self-cultivating peasants with proprietory rights on land (plus more or less self-sufficient and self-working artisans and traders) formed 42% of the total households and owned 68% of the total land (see 1946 survey).

Class III had very little or no land of their own. They were the propertyless class mainly dependent on Class I for their living.

Mukherjee (1957b) says that the Bengal rural economy during British rule was dependent on two sets of production relations: one between classes I and III as owner and non-owner of the means of production (mainly land) and user and supplier of labour, respectively; and the other constituted by class II as owner of the means of production and user of own labour. Mukherjee argues that class II was predominant and, in fact, the single form of production relations in rural Bengal in pre-British days and , while the introduction of the Permanent Settlement in 1793 (which brought the concept of private property in land) facilitated the emergence of classes I and III (for details, see Mukherjee, 1957b: 14-40).

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footnote cont'd.

9. Others, as a whole, group the rest of the households pursuing some ill-defined lowly occupations or living on the charity of other members of society.

In Class I and Class III relationships, Mukherjee noted the predominance of a landholder and sharecropper relationship rather than between a supervisory farmer and an agricultural labour. There were, according to Mukherjee (1957b:50) two reasons for such a relationship:

(i) Such a relationship secured their employment throughout the year; while, because of extreme overcrowding in agriculture, if they remained as agricultural labourers, they might not have been able to secure regular employment.

(ii) As a sharecropper the peasant still remained a grihastha or husbandman and was socially ranked more or less at the level of a raiyat (Class II peasants) and not as Kisans or agricultural labourers - a group socially placed lower than the former.

This new relation of production in agriculture was primarily determined by the demands of the property-owning privileged class in rural society and the gradual transformation of the agrarian economy from the closed door subsitence one to a market oriented open economy. The relationship also allowed constant exploitation of the landless and near-landless population by the landed gentry and this further aggravated the situation. This helped concentration of land and hence the agricultural income in the hands of Class I. And the cumulative effect of the operation of these factors caused poverty amongst the owners of uneconomic holdings and led to further inequality and concentration of land in the hands of Class I. Consequently, sharecropping and cultivation by hired labour grew at the expense of self-cultivation without any improvements in the technique of production.

However, during the last days of British rule, the agrarian structure based on the Zamindari system came under tremendous pressure from all sides. Gradually the arbitrary power of Zamindars and their subinfeudatory agents (Clsss I) began to be limited in the face of increasing socio-political pressure created by the division of holdings due to inheritance and population growth, increasing power of the urban professional classes as agents of British imperial policy, awakening of the peasantry as exemplified in the

Tebhaga Movement [5] and other peasant movements. Communal discontent also worried Hindu Zamindars (the majority of whom were in Northern Bengal) about their future stakes in estates (Abdullah, 1976: 79-80). The pressures to abolish the exploitative Zamindari system were well reflected in the Floud Commission Report. The Commission recommended the abolition of the Zamindari system in Bengal and its replacement by a settlement directly between the state and the cultivators (Floud Commission Report, 1940: 41-46). The system virtually collapsed during the turbulent years preceding the partition of India in 1947. After partition, practically all of the large Hindu Zamindars and rich raiyats left the territory now designed as Bangladesh for India. The departure of Hindi Zamindars and raiyats created enough 'illegal' opportunities for the remaining rich Muslim peasants to expropriate the land vacated by the Hindu raiyats as well as landlords. As a result, there is every reason to believe that the regional variations in differentiation we noted earlier increased after 1947 and certainly after 1950 when the Zamindari system was formally abolished (Wood, 1978: 6-7). To legalize the defacto expropriation of land by Muslim jotedars and rich peasants (the power base of the then Muslim League Government in power) the East Bengal Legislative Assembly passed the East Bengal State Acquision

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5 Tebhaga Movement evolved around the demand to enhance the bargadar's share from the existing half of the produce to two thirds in the forties. The movement was organised by Bengal Kishan Sobha, a frontal organisation of the Communist Party of India (CPI), following the second world war. In 19 districts bargadars involved themselves into action and forcibly implemented their demands (Sen, Suril, Agrarian struggle in Bengal 1946-47, People's publishing House, New Delhi, 1972). Simultaneously in Mymensingh, Sobha organised the peasants against 'Tonko', a system under which they had to pay fixed and exhorbitant rent in kind to the landlords irrespective of the quality of produce obtained (Umar, 1975: 252-264). Nankor movement in Sylhet was also noted by Umar (ibid).

and Tenancy Act (EBSATA) on February 16, 1950, after about two and a half years of deliberations and amendments of the bill proposed immediately after partition. Two and a half years time was long enough to give a signal to the rich landholders to organise their papers with the connivance of the revenue officials so that they could evade the ensuing Act. Moreoveras we shall see the implementation processes of the Act were not sufficient to ensure redistribution of land. Infact, at the end of the day concentration of land in the villages remained as before and in some cases it increased.

2. THE ACT OF 1950 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE AGRARIAN STRUCTURE:

The Act of 1950 had the following provisions (Mahmud, 1959: 3-4):

(i) All rent receiving interests in all lands stood acquired so that actual tillers of the land became direct tenants under the government. All raiyats (to be called 'maliks' henceforth) were to have permanent, heritable and transferable rights to use their land in any way they liked.

(ii) Subletting of land in future was forbidden. However, cultivation under barga (share-cropping) was not to be treated as subletting but as equivalent to cultivation through wage labour.

(iii) All cultivable lands in excess of 100 bighas (33.3 acres) per family or 10 bighas per member of the family, whichever was larger, plus homestead land up to a maximum of 10 bighas, were to be acquired by the government. This ceiling would be relaxable in cases of tea, coffee, sugarcane and rubber plantations, carsia leaves, gardens, orchards and large scale appliances and large scale diary farming. The excess land thus acquired would be settled with bonafide cultivators holding less than 3 acres of land.

(iv) All hats (periodic market places), bazars (daily market places) and fisheries would be acquired by the state irrespective of their present ownership.

(v) The rent receiving interests of estates belonging to religious institutions ('waqful-lillah' and 'waqful-aulad' in case of Muslims and 'debottor' in case of Hindus) were not to be exempted from state acquisitions. In case of religious property meant for private (i.e. waqful-aulad) welfare the ceiling on retainable land would be 375 bighas whereas for those devoted entirely to public welfare (i.e. waqful-lillah) no ceiling would apply.

(vi) For acquisition of rent receiving interests, compensation was payable on a graduated scale ranging from 10 times the net annual income in case of persons with net income of Tk. 500 or less per annum to 2 times the net annual income in case of persons with net income of Tk. 1 lakh (one hundred thousand) or more. In case of 'public' religious property, the compensation would be a perpetual annuity equal to the annual net income. But in case of 'private' religious property compensation would be at the same rate as that for secular property.

(vii) For acquisition of "excess" lands, compensation was payable at the rate of 5 times the net annual profit from the land. Again, in case of 'public' religious property, the compensation would be a perpetual annuity equal to the net annual income. For 'private' religious property, compensation rates would follow those for secular property.

(viii) Compensation could be paid either in cash or in bonds or both. The bonds would be non-negotiable and payable in not more than 40 annual instalments and would carry 3% interest.

(ix) Maximum rent would not exceed 1/10th of the annual gross produce of the land. Fixed kind-rent, irrespective of production, as existing in Mymensingh, and known as 'tonk' was to be abolished. In effect, it meant that kind rent was not to exceed 50% of the produce.

(x) The 'bonded labour' system known as 'Nankar' in Sylhet was to be abolished. Under this system, in lieu of using land, the 'Nankar' had to provide 'corvee' to his landlord.

(xi) If not less than 2/3rd of the villagers holding /3rd of the village cultivable land applied, the collector could consolidate all the holdings of the village.

(xii) No holding could be sub-divided to the extent that the rent of any portion would be less than Tk. 1.0.

(xiii) Transfer of land would be restricted to only 'bonafide' cultivators.

Certain amendments were made to these from time to time. The following are a few of them (Abdullah, 1976: 81-82):

(1) The amount of retainable khas land was raised from 100 to 375 bighas by the East Pakistan Ordinance No. XV of 1961. Some land had then to be restored to previous owners.

(2) In 1964, the exemption of the ceiling (now 375 bighas) was extended to co-operative societies, "provided the ownership of the land is transferred unconditionally to the society by the individual members" (Kabir, 1972; 62).

In fine, the Act had two broad objectives. First, the elimination of rent-receiving interests previously enjoyed by the intermediaries and illegal exactions, and second, the redistribution of excess land. Apparently, the Act was supposed to have a great impact on the traditional agrarian structure. But in reality, it did not change it in any significant way. More specifically, the way in which the land used to be owned and operated, remained the same even after the enactment of the Act. Thus, we note the following:

(i) Abwabs or illegal exactions were not reduced and the tenants were hardly any more secure than they were under the old system.

In the old system, Abdullah, argues:

> ...a commercially minded landed class may have resorted to large-scale eviction, but no such class existed in Bengal, and evictions were rare. Sale of land for arrears was more common but, so that procedure is, if anything, more expeditious now, so that the tenants may well have cause to feel less rather than more secure. In the past, when the Zamindar failed to collect enough rent to pay the revenue due to the state, it was the estate that was put up for sale. (Abdullah, 1976: 86)

Moreover, the lower level government functionaries (e.g. the tahsilders) were no less oppressive than the naibs and gomastas of the old Zamindars. Except for a slight increase in the rent collection of the Government (most of which went to meet the expenses of the revenue administration), the impact of the Act of 1950 was insignificant. The intermediaries between the state and the cultivators were not effectively removed, but were merely substituted by another category, perhaps more powerful, which possessed government backing.

(ii) The redistributive effect was also not very significant. The ceiling was too high relative to the average size of holding. In fact, according to one source, there were 529 families with more than 375 bighas (Hussain Report, 1963: 62). According to a different source, the number was 439 and the total amount of excess Khas land acquired was only 164 thousand acres (Abdullah, 1976: 83). This was less than 1 per cent of the net cropped area of 1947/48. If the acquired land had been redistributed among all the landless labourers (male and females over 12 years of age and as estimated in 1961 census), they would have received on average only 0.06 acres per head, or 0.3 acres per landless family. Moreover, all the acquired land was not cultivable either (Abdullah, 1976 estimates that only 40% was cultivable).

The implementation processes were also fraught with inefficiency and corruption. The criteria of categorisation used in the Act were not properly conceived and hence there was delay in implementation.

The system of salami (earnest money paid along with applications for acquired land) made it slower still. There was strong pressure from the rural rich to maintain the status quo and there was active collaboration between the rural rich and the administration. They were opposed to any reform and they were powerful enough to subvert any attempt to reorganise the agrarian structure. (Siddiqui 1980a).

So one can argue that the 1950 Act hardly had any favourable impact on the condition of the poorer peasantry. On the contrary, the power and wealth of the rural rich improved. Inequality worsened further. A reflection of this will be seen in the following sub-sections.

3. The Present Agrarian Structure:

The present agrarian structure is, in fact, the creation of the EBSATA of 1950. Macro level information on the land-ownership pattern is not always available on a consistent basis. Nevertheless, we will present the land/man relations for Bangladesh covering the last two decades in chronological order, from whatever macro data that are available.

3a. The Agrarian Structure of the Sixties:

We have two important Government sources for land information for the sixties - 1960 Census of Agriculture (G.O.P., 1962) and the Master Survey of Agriculture (7th Round, 1968). The Agricultural Census of 1960 found that in 1960, 61 per cent of all farms were owner operated; another 37 per cent were owner-cum-tenant operated and only 2 per cent were purely tenant operated. Roughly similar figures were also reported in the Master Survey (7th Round, G.O.E.P., 1968). Table 4.3 gives further details.

TABLE 4.3

LAND TENURE PATTERN IN THE 1960S

Tenure Categories	percentage of farms		Average size of farms (acres	
	1960	1968	1960	1968
Owner farms	61	66	3.1	2.7
Owner-cum-tenant farms	37	30	4.3	4.0
Tenant farms	2	4	2.4	3.0
All farms	100	100	3.5	3.2

Sources: (i) G.O.P., 1962 (1960 Census)
(ii) G.O.E.P., 1968 (Master Survey)

The average size of landholding has been, historically, very small. According to the 1960 Census, the average size of farm was only 3.5 acres; the average size of the pure-tenant farm was smallest (2.4 acres) and that of the owner-cum-tenant farm was largest (4.3) acres. The 1968 Master Survey, however, indicated that the average size of farm had fallen to 3.2 acres; the average size of owner-operated farm being the smallest (2.7 acres) while that of the owner-cum-tenant farm was the largest (4 acres).

The distribution of farms according to operational holdings was skewed even in the 1960s. Table 4.4. below reveals this inequality quite sharply.

TABLE 4.4

DISTRIBUTION OF FARMS ACCORDING TO OPERATIONAL PATTERN IN 1960S

FARM SIZE (in acres)	percentage of farms		percentage of farms (acres)	
	1960	1968	1960	1968
0 - 2.5	51	57	16	21
2.5 - 7.5	38	34	45	48
7.5 - 12.5	7	6	19	15
12.5 and above	4	3	20	16

Source: 1960 (i) G.O.P., 1962
(ii) G.O.E.P., 1968

One can see from the above table that a large proportion of farm households were very small holders. The 1960 census reveals that 51 per cent of farm households had less than 2.5 acres and operated about 16 per cent of the total operated area. On the other hand, only about 11 per cent of households with about 39 per cent of operated area controlled more than 7.5 acres on the average. Similar findings were also reported in the 1968 Master Survey. Neither the 1960 nor the 1968 source gives information on the ownership pattern.

We have, in this section, presented some data on the landholding pattern in Bangladesh during the 1960s. The widespread existence of small holdings during the 1960s should not obscure the presence of regional variations in land control and social structure. The same sources, when examined region by region portray a differential picture. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 gives us a brief view of regional variations.

TABLE 4.5

REGIONAL VARIATIONS IN LAND TENURE: 1960-61

Division/Ecological Zones	% of rural population	% of owner farms	% of owner-cum -tenant farms	% of tenant farms	% of shared cropped cultivated area	% of share croppers	% of landles labourers
1. Rajshahi ("North Bengal")	24	21	30	51	37	44	23
2. Khulna ("South Bengal")	20	19	21	15	27	19	23
3. Dhaka ("Central Bengal")	30	28	32	24	24	18	30
4. Chittagong (excluding Chittagong Hill Tracts) ("South East Bengal")	26	32	17	10	12	19	24
TOTALS	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Bertocci, 1976: 176, table 2.

TABLE 4.6

LAND TENURE DIFFERENCES BY DIVISION 1960-61

Division	Owner farms (%)	Owner-cum-tenant farms	Tenant farms (%)	Mean farm size per cultivated area (acres)		
				Owner farms (acres)	Owner-cum-tenant farms (acres)	Tenant farms (acres)
1. Rajshahi	51	46	3	3.7	4.2	2.6
2. Khulna	59	40	1	2.9	4.9	2.8
3. Dhaka	58	41	1	2.3	3.2	1.6
4. Chittagong (excluding Hill Tracts)	74	25	1	2.0	2.9	1.8
AVERAGE:	61	38	2	2.7	3.8	2.2

Source: Bertocci, 1976: 177, table 3.

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 present data on gross areas, the divisions (comprising a number of districts) which broadly correspond to the different ecological zones of Bengal Delta. Table 4.5 compares the data on landownership of each division as percentage categories of the whole of Bangladesh (East Pakistan in the sixties). The table focusses a striking contrast between North Bengal with other zones in terms of land tenural arrangements. Thus, in 1960, North Bengal was the home of 51% of pure tenant farms (no ownership) in Bangladesh; 44% of the share-croppers were in Rajshahi commanding over 37% of the total sharecropped area. The corresponding figures for Dhaka division were only 24% and 18%. But the % of landless labourers in Dhaka division was much higher (30%) than that of Rajshahi division (23%). Since pressure on land in the Central region was higher, more people had to sell labour for their living. As we shall see, this tendency of alienation of more people from land increased much faster in the later period, in particular to this part of the country. The inflow of modern inputs like fertilizer, irrigation, credit only accentuated this process.

Table 4.6 gives us similar trends. As we move from the north-west to south-east, we observe that the size of holdings for all farms shifts from larger to smaller proportions. The number of owner farms also varies from 51% in North Bengal (Rajshahi) to 74% in the South East (Chittagong). Correspondingly, the incidence of tenancy (including sharecropping) is higher in North Bengal.

One may argue that these differences, in a region where the average size of the holding is so small do not bear much significance. But there can be inequalities even when all the land holdings are relatively small. As we have seen earlier, despite the mean size being very small, the disparities of landownership in this part of the world have been historically well marked and the processes of concentration have been getting further strengthened.

3b. Agrarian Structure In The 1970s:

We have available for the 1970s two representative surveys, the Land Occupancy Survey of 1977 and of 1978 (B.B.S., 1977 & 1978) which give national level data on land-man relation. The Land Occupancy Surveyof1978 seems to be more reliable than that of 1977. The 1978 survey estimates the amount of land at 20.8 million acres compared to 19.4 million acres by 1977 survey. The former is closer to the net cropped area (Jannuzi et al, 1977 & 1980).

We have also, the Agriculture Census 1977[6] to provide necessary information on the contemporary agrarian structure. But an accurate picture of the landownership pattern in Bangladesh is hard to get as most people hesitate to give this sensitive information. So it is very likely that the survey findings underestimate the extent of inequality in the distribution of land ownership. The 1978 survey gives us the latest information on the land ownership pattern in Bangladesh. The following table summarizes the information obtained in the survey.

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6 The agricultural census 1977, however, appears to contain serious bias. For instance, it seems to present the picture that the number of farm households have hardly increased since 1960 and the average farm size has not changed (and remained at 3.5 acres). These findings indeed, ignore the fact that there has been a significant increase in the size of the population and the fragmentation of holdings through inheritance law. (ee also Osmani and Rahman, 1981: 23 for further reservations).

TABLE 4.7

DISTRIBUTION OF LANDOWNERSHIP IN 1978

Land ownership groups (in acres)	Number of households (thousands)	% of house-holds	% of population	% of land owned
No land except homestead	3462	28.8	23.4	8.3
Up to 1.0 (excluding landless)	3681	30.6	27.7	
1.01 - 2.0	1830	15.2	15.5	12.8
2.01 - 3.0	1045	8.7	9.6	12.3
3.01 - 4.0	621	5.2	6.4	10.3
4.01 - 5.0	371	3.1	4.0	7.9
5.01 - 7.0	427	3.5	5.1	12.0
7.01 - 10.0	273	2.3	3.4	10.9
10.01 - 15.0	181	1.5	2.6	10.4
Over 15.0	139	1.2	2.2	15.1
ALL GROUPS:	12031	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Jannuzi and Peach, 1980: Appendix Tables E-I & E-IV .

As we can see feom table 4.7, about 29 per cent of rural families were landless[7] (having at best homestead land), and if we include in this figure, the families who owned up to 0.5 acres, the total comes to about 50 per cent, who are functionally landless.

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7 The Land Occupancy Survey of 1977 puts the figure at 33 per cent. We feel that the 1978 survey findings are closer to reality.

At the other extreme, 2.7 per cent of rural families owning more than 10 acres control nearly one fourth of the total land. Households owning more than 5.0 acres constitute the top 8.5 per cent of the rural households. They own nearly half of the total land, although they constitute only 13 per cent of the population.

Although there is considerable inequality in the distribution of land ownership, the pattern of distribution of operational holdings may be slightly more egalitarian. But one should not overemphasise this since it might lead to an exaggeration of the role of small and medium farmers (Hossain, 1981: 25). The average farm size, according to the 1977 census (G.O.B.D., 1981) is 3.51 acres. It seems there was little or no change in farm size over the two decades. This appears slightly misleading as noted in footnote 6 of this chapter. The operation of the Land Occupancy Surveys give average sizes of operational holdings as 2.3 and 2.1 acres in 1977 and 1978 respectively, which appear more plausible.

The Agricultural Census of 1977 seems to have favoured the view that the growing inequality in the ownership of land has been balanced by the tenural arrangements (sharecropping, fixed-renting). The distribution of operated holdings has been more egalitarian according to the census. Even so, the 1977 census reported that marginal farms (up to 1.0 acres) constituting 15.9% of the total, operated only 2.7% of the farm areas as against 32.7% of farm areas being operated by large farms (7.51 acres and above) constituting about 9.4% of total farms.

Let us now look at the tenurial pattern in the 1970s.

The following table shows us the tenur al pattern:

TABLE 4.8

TENUR AL PATTERN IN THE SEVENTIES

Tenure Categories	% of holdings		% of area		Average size of farms (acres)	
	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978
Owners	61.2	64.5	54.0	58.0	2.0	1.9
Owner-cum-tenants	32.0	28.1	41.6	38.0	3.0	2.9
Pure Tenants	6.8	7.4	4.4	4.0	1.5	1.2

Source: Land Occupancy Surveys, 1977 and 1978

One can note from the above table that farm size for the pure tenant is the smallest (1.2 acres) and that of the owner-cum-tenants is the largest (2.4 acres).

From our discussion so far, we may identify the following trends:

1. The distribution of land (both on the ownership and operational basis) became more unequal in the late seventies compared to the late sixties. Osmani and Rahman (1981: 24) estimated the fractile groups and Gini Co-efficients for the sixties and seventies and their findings support the above hypothesis. These are reproduced in Table 4.9.

TABLE 4.9

EXTENT OF INEQUALITIES IN LAND DISTRIBUTION IN BANGLADESH IN THE 1960S AND 1970S

SHARES OF FRACTILE GROUPS (IN %)

Fractile groups	1960	1968	1977	1978
1. Bottom 60 per cent	25	24	11	9
2. Middle 30 per cent	39	40	40	39
3. Top 10 per cent	36	36	50	52
Gini Co-efficient of Landholding:				
a) Operational	0.49	0.48	-	-
b) Ownership	-	-	0.63	0.66

Source: Osmani and Rahman, 1981: 24, table 9.

Notes: (a) The figures for the shares in 1960 and 1968 refer to operational holdings, whereas those of 1977 and 1978 refer to ownership. Operational holdings include rented in land from others. Since the tenants have no permanent right over the rented in land and can be ejected at will (Ahmed and Timmons, 1936: 58) operational holdings do not represent the true picture of control over the most important asset in the villages (i.e. land). In that sense the data of the sixties are not strictly comparable with those of the seventies. But one can get at least some trends. However, one must be aware of the myth of 'egalitarianism' in the distribution of operational holdings.

cont'd.....

The extent of pure tenancy increased over these two decades at the cost of the owner-cum-tenants. This means that some of the small owners and owner-cum-tenants sold off their land and became puretenants. They probably leased in part or all of the land they had sold off, which explains the simultaneous increase in the volume of rented in land. The process has in fact accentuated income inequality rather than moderated it (as claimed by some, say, for example, Hossain 1981).

4. INEQUALITY AND POVERTY:

The unequal agrarian structure that has evolved over time has been at the root of processes which intensify income inequality and poverty. As we have already noticed, landlessness has increased sharply (Adnan et al, 1978; 120, 1974; BBS, 1979) on the one hand while there has been a growing concentration of assets, and particularly land, in the rural areas on the other. The table 4.10 gives us an indication of the trends.

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footnote cont'd.

(b) Ginio co-efficients have been calculated from the formula: $G = 1 + 1/n - (2/nM)(y_1 + 2y_2 + 3y_3 + \ldots\ldots\ldots ny_n)$

Where G = Ginio co-efficient

M = the mean of the characteristics (here landholding size).

n = number of observations (here households) and

$y_1 \geqslant y_2 \geqslant y_3 \geqslant \cdots\cdots \geqslant y_n$.

Thus the highest landholding size is y_1 and it has multiple I. The second highest landholding size is designated as y_2 and its multiple is 2. The smallest number is .01 in case of operational and effective holdings and '0' in case of ownership holdings. (see Sen, 1972: 31).

TABLE 4.10

GINI CO-EFFICIENTS OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME IN BANGLADESH: 1963/64 to 1976/77

	1963/64	1966/67	1968/69	1973/74	1976/77
RURAL	0.34	0.32	0.27	0.36	0.44
NATIONAL	0.36	0.34	0.29	0.36	0.45

Source: Osmani and Rahman, 1981: Table 3, P 11.

As shown in the table, although inequality declined towards the end of the sixties it went up in the seventies. By 1976/77, inequality in the rural areas and in the country as a whole was higher than in 1963/64.

With the growth in inequality, the poverty situation has also been worsening over time. There is no standard set of criteria for measuring the poverty situation in Bangladesh. Different sources use different criteria to estimate the poverty line. (i) The Planning Commission (SFYP, 1980: 1-15) defines a minimum calorie intake of 2122 cal as the poverty line. On the basis of this criterion, 84.6% of the Bangladesh population is below the poverty line (the proportion being 86.7% for rural areas). The Planning Commission takes 1805 cal as the minimum requirement for defining the extreme poverty line. On this basis, it estimates 53.6% of the Bangladesh population lies below the poverty line.

(ii) The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the main source of national statistics, uses different criteria to define poverty line (BBS, 1981: 71). According to this source, the value of the

minimum consumption basket to satisfy per capita per day calorie requirements (2130 k cal for urban and 2150 k cal for rural areas) and the average value of non-food items such as clothing, fuel, foot-wear, medical care, transport, housing etc. were calculated and these values in turn give the poverty level income. Two poverty level incomes have been estimated for the year 1976-77 by the Bureau. The first is based on a combination of both food and non-food items and the second is based on food items alone. The estimated poverty level per capita annual income based on the first method (i.e. food + non-food requirement at constant prices of 1973-74) is Tk. 1053 for rural and Tk. 1030 for urban areas in 1976-77. The poverty level income based on the second method (i.e. taking only the food items) has been estimated to be Tk. 879 for rural areas and Tk. 744 for urban areas for the same year. The population of households below these poverty level incomes was then obtained as follows:

TABLE 4.11

PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH PER CAPITA INCOME BELOW POVERTY LINE

Area	1973 - 74		1976 - 77*	
	a	b	a	b
Rural	78	56	81	69
Urban	76	43	70	36

Source: BBS, 1981: Table 1.1, P 73

Notes: (a) Estimates based on the value of food and non-food consumption items.

(b) Estimates based on the value of food items only.

* 1976-77 estimates are based on 1973-74 prices. Definitions of rural and urban areas are as in 1974 population census.

(iii) A.R, Khan in another estimate finds the degree of rural poverty as given in table 4.12.

TABLE 4.12

INCIDENCE OF RURAL POVERTY IN BANGLADESH:
1963/64 - 1975

Year	Absolutely Poor* households (in %)	Extremely Poor** households
1963/64	51.7	9.8
1975 (first quarter)	70.3	50.5

Source: A.R. Khan, 1976

Note: *Per capita monthly income of Tk. 23.61 corresponding to per capita Calorie intake by the family of 1935 k cals, i.e. 90% of the recommended intake.

**Per capita monthly income of Tk. 17.02 corresponding to per capita intake by the family of 1720 k cals i.e. 80% of the recommended intake.

The Nutrition Surveys of Bangladesh indicate a similar trend of poverty. An average Bangladeshi, according to these surveys, not only experienced a nutritional deterioration between 1962/63 and 1975/76, but also a reduction in consumption of fish, meat and pulses (the source of meagre amount of protein intake). Thus while the per capita food intake declined from 835.0 grams to 807.0 grams per day between 1962/63 and 1975/76 (the percentage change being - 2.6), the per capita consumption of pulse, fish and meat oils and fat declined from 28.0 grams, 38.5 grams, and 6.2 grams to 23.8 grams, 26.1 grams and 3.2 grams respectively. The percentages of decline were - 15.0, - 32.2 and - 48.4 respectively. Table 4.13 below shows clearly the steady decline in the overall nutrient intake over the two decades.

TABLE 4.13

PER CAPITA CALORIE CONSUMPTION IN THE RURAL AREAS OF BANGLADESH: 1962-64 TO 1976-77

Period	Food intake in grams	Nutrient intake	
		Calorie (kcal)	Protein (gram)
1962-64	841	2251	57.5
1973-74	729	1885	50.2
1975-76	806	2094	58.6
1976-77	624	1707	41.4

Sources: 1962-64, Nutrition survey of East Pakistan (Ministry of Health, 1966)
1975-76, Nutrition survey of rural Bangladesh (University of Dhaka, 1977)
1973-74 & 1976-77, Household expenditure survey.

Table 4.13,shows us the extent of the poverty situation on an average basis. The situation is not the same for all groups. If we examine the food and nutrient intake for different groups of the rural household we get a differentiated picture.

Table 4.14 indicates how pervasive is the inequality situation in rural Bangladesh. As is seen in the table, the position of the landless group is slightly better than the near landless groups (i.e. 0.01-0.49 acre group).

TABLE 4.14

FOOD AND NUTRIENT INTAKE BY GROUPS:1975

Household groups (in acres)	Food intake (grams/person/per day)	Nutrient Intake	
		Calorie (K cal)	Protein (gm)
0	694	1925	52.9
0.01 - 0.49	683	1924	52.6
0.50 - 0.99	745	2035	57.7
1.00 - 2.99	785	2193	62.5
3.00 and above	843	2375	67.6

Source: 1975-76 Nutrition survey of Bangladesh, BBS, 1981: 77.

The Bangladesh Bureau of statistics (1981) estimated 2248 k cals as the minimum requirement for a person. According to its calculation (based on the Food Nutritional Survey of Bangladesh, 1975-76) as many as 59 per cent of households had Calorie intake less than the above requirement. Table 4.15 gives the details.

TABLE 4.15

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS MEETING DIFFERENT PROPORTION OF CALORIE REQUIREMENT: 1975-76

Percent of requirement	Percent of household
Less than 50	9
50 - 59	6
60 - 69	8
70 - 79	12
80 - 89	11
90 - 99	13
100 and over	41

Source: BBS, 1981: 80

The poverty situation prevailing in rural Bangladesh as reflected in the above paragraphs is also supported when one looks into the trend of real wages, especially the rural real wages situation in Bangladesh.

5. TREND IN REAL WAGES:

To establish the trends in real wages, the choice of a price index is crucial. Although BBS publishes cost of living indices for major districts and the upper and lower income groups, none of these indices presents national averages or goes back far enough to determine long term trends. To determine trends in average national wage level, two composite indices - one for rural and the other for urban areas - have been constructed by adjusting the cost-of-living index for Government employees in Dhaka with the average weights calculated from the 1973-74 Household Expenditure Survey. We present the trend for national as well as urban and rural cost of living indices in table 4.16.

TABLE 4.16

BANGLADESH: COST OF LIVING INDICES (GENERAL)

(1955/56 = 100)

Year	Cost of living - indices		
	National	Rural	Urban
1959/60	127.62	127.54	125.89
1969/70	177.96	177.75	176.80
1972/73	328.10	328.08	322.22
1973/74	461.99	462.22	451.28
1975/76	600.15	679.30	676.23
1976/77	667.34	665.84	670.48
1977/78	772.61	770.94	776.04
1978/79	842.00	840.00	850.00
1979/80	979.00	976.00	984.00

Source: World Bank (1981, Vol. II, Annex V table 2).

Note : Average weights have been calculated from 1973-74 Household Expenditure Survey.

Weights were given as follows:

Items	Weights		
	National	Rural	Urban
Food	74.2	74.7	67.9
Fuel & lighting	8.0	8.1	7.3
Housing	5.2	4.8	9.4
Clothing	5.3	5.3	5.6
Miscellaneous	7.3	7.10	9.8

Since our major emphasis has been upon understanding the peasantry, we will discuss here only the trends in real wages for the rural areas.

RURAL WAGES:

Agricultural wages, when deflated by the rural cost of living index or simply by the price of rice, show a downward trend in real terms. Although 1969/70 was a record year for agricultural production, real wages of agricultural labour were nearly 18% lower than in 1963/64 (WB, 1981, Annex V,P.1). Agricultural production declined between 1969/70 and 1974/75, with real agricultural wages declining further. In 1975/76, agricultural production exceeded the levels achieved in 1969/70, and since then has increased substantially. Real wages of agricultural labour in 1979/80 were, however, 23% below the 1969/70 level. After a continuous decline in real wages between 1963/64 and 1965/76, real wages of agricultural workers improved slightly in 1976/77 after the good harvest of 1975/76. But this improvement was not similar in all regions. In Kushtia, Faridpur, Tangail, Rajshahi, Comilla and Khulna, accounting for 27% of total foodgrain production, one could see some improvement in real wages between 1975/76 and 1979/80. But the national average real wage of agricultural labour has continued to stagnate around the 1975/76 level. The table 4.17 indicates the trend:

TABLE 4.17

TREND IN REAL AGRICULTURAL WAGES
(1969-70 = 100)

YEAR	Agricultural wage Index
1972-73	66.5
1973-74	63.2
1974-75	60.7
1975-76	76.6
1976-77	75.6
1977-78	74.3
1978-79	81.0

Source: GOBD, Planning Commission, SEYP, 1980: 1-15

Real wages, in two other major activities of rural Bangladesh, fisheries and the handloom industry also declined between 1963/64 and 1975/76. After 1975/76, we notice some increase in the real wages of these two activities, even through real wages in 1979-80 were still 11-16% below the 1969/70 level (World Bank 1981, Annex V, Table 3).

The above trends can primarily be explained by the fact that the labour force has been growing faster than employment opportunities. The rural labour force is estimated to have increased by 14% between 1963/64 and 1969/70 and by another 16% between 1973/74 and 1979/80, while food production increased by 12% and 13% respectively in these periods. The total cropped area increased by only 1.7% during 1963/64 to 1969/70 and by 2% during 1973/74 to 1979/80. Studies of the impact of technical change on employment suggest that the entire package of new seeds, fertilizer, irrigation technology increases employment at a rate which is about one-third to one-half that of the increase in crop production (WB, 1981, Annex V, P. 2). This implies that the aggregate demand for agricultural labour increased by only some 1.5% a year over the last 10-12 years, whereas, the rural labour force expanded by at least 2.2% a year. If one compares the decline in real wages of agricultural labour vis-a-vis industrial labour, one finds that the figures continued to decline during 1963/64 to 1969/70, improved slightly during the period 1969/70 to 1975/76 but again declined during 1975/76 to 1977/78 in relation to other sectors (World Band, 1981, Annex V, Table. 6).

Summary:

From our discussions, we can see that on the one hand the agrarian structure is becoming more inegalitarian while the condition of the poorer section, particularly the landless and the landpoor peasantry, has been deteriorating consistently. Different poverty and inequality indicators calculated from the government supplied data confirm these trends. These macro trends, as we will see, have been shaping the phenomenon of differentiation of the peasantry and they, too, are being shaped simultaneously by it.

FIELDWORK FINDINGS : PART-A

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENTIATION

In this part of our fieldwork findings we will see how far the notion of demographic differentiation of the peasantry is applicable in rural Bangladesh. We will first test the hypotheses propounded by Chayanov in the context of Russia and this will be followed by testing Shanin's mobility schema.

CHAPTER V

TESTING THE CHAYANOVIAN HYPOTHESES

Except for Hunt's study (1979) we did not know many others which have tried to apply the Chayanovian model empirically in the context of a thrid world peasantry. Examples are even rarer in the South Asian context. In this chapter we will primarily depend on the information gathered during our field work in two Bangladesh villages in order to test the Chayanovian hypothesis we formulated in the last chapter.

HYPOTHESIS I:

The basic requirement for an economy to be Chayanovian is the complete absence of wage labour. In more modified form, one can hypothesise that there shall be the dominance of non-wage family economic units.

We do not have enough macro-level data for Bangladesh by which we might prove or disprove this primary notion of Chayanovian economy. But we have a number of micro studies.

It is true that as yet the family labour component dominates in the total supply of labour. But one cannot argue that there is a complete absence of wage labour and the dominance of the non-wage family unit. As many of the micro studies, including our one, reveal the extent of pure cultivators (employing no wage labour) is indeed very insignificant. In fact, the proportion of wage labour has been growing steadily. In 1974 the national census of Bangladesh reported that as much as one quarter of the total agricultural population depended on wage employment. The Directorate of Agriculture (Extension and Management) in a country-wide survey conducted in 1977 found the proportion to be 30% (BARC, 1978: iv). The proportion has increased over the last few years and some regions have shown a significantly higher capability of absorbing wage labourers. Especially in those districts where modern technologies have some inroads, the proportion of wage labour vis-a-vis family labour has increased quite sharply. The World Bank, in a recent study,

finds that "There are the landless and the near landless households, comprising nearly one-half of all rural households, who must depend on wage employment for their livelihood" (World Bank, 1981: Vol II, Annex IV, P.16).

We can also present the results of a number of micro studies which establish the high incidence of wage labour. Table 5.1 summarizes the results.

TABLE 5.1

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF WAGE LABOUR AND FAMILY LABOUR IN BANGLADESH AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Area of survey (Districts)	Period of survey	% of total labour supplied by			
		Family workers	Permanently hired workers	Casually hired workers	Total hired workers
1. Mymensingh	1973-74	59.2	12.3	28.5	40.8
2. Dinajpur	1973-74	69.4	15.0	15.6	30.6
3. Comilla	1974-75	56.1	6.5	37.5	44.0
4. Dhaka (Dacca)	1978-79	56.7	-	43.3	43.3
5. Chittagong	1978-79	77.6	-	22.4	22.4
6. Barisal	1979-80	71.4	-	28.6	28.6

Sources: (i) Centre for Scoial Studies, Dhaka University, 1980
(ii) Hossain, M, 1981; BDS, 1977: Vol.VI, No. 3
(iii) Khan, A.R., 1981
(iv) Rahman, M, 1978

One can see from the above results that in some districts (say for example, Comilla or Dhaka in the Eastern Bangladesh), the proportion

of wage labour is more than 40%. The proportion of wage labour is, by comparison on the lower side in Northern Bangladesh where the productive forces have not developed so well.

In another study conducted in two areas of Dinajpur and Comilla, Rahman found that about one-third of the households earned their livelihood mainly from wage employment (Rahman, 1979: 74). He identified 19% and 13% of households in Dinajpur and Comilla as pure cultivators (who neither hire in nor hire out agricultural labour). From the income earning point of view as well, Rahman noticed about 9.4% of the total earnings of the area came from agricultural wage labourers.

In our study areas, also, we noticed quite a high proportion of households engaged in agricultural wage earning. In village-I, about 40% of households were dependent on agricultural wage earning (35% had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation) in 1980-81 and in village-2, 29% of households were agricultural wage earning households (21% had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation).

The percentage of pure cultivator households were 15% and 20% in village-I and village-2 respectively during our study period. The percentage would be even smaller if we excluded the potential landless labourers (i.e. those households who owned less than 1.50 acres of land in village-I and 2.5 acres in village-2) from the total number of households. In fact, our survey results reveal that more than 90% of the cultivating households in both the villages employed casual labourers. The percentage of households employing casual labour is almost 100% in the higher land-owning groups.

Rahman recorded as high as 97% of farms employing casual labour in 1974-75 in the relatively developed region of Comilla district. The following table gives us the relative weights of family labour and hired labour for our study village-I, for which information was collected most intensively.

TABLE 5.2

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND HIRED LABOUR:1980-81

VILLAGE - 1

Land Ownership Groups (in acres)	No. of H.H.	Total family labour (Mandays) (1)	HIRED IN LABOUR (In Mandays)			Total labour (in Mandays) (5)	1 as % of 5	2 as % of 5	3 as % of 5	4 as % of 5
			Permanent (2)	Casual (3)	Total (4)					
	12	259 (21.50)	0	95 (7.91)	95 (7.91)	354 (29.50)	73.1	0	26.8	26.8
.01- .50	70	963 (13.75)	0	271 (3.87)	271 (3.87)	1234 (17.62)	78.0	0	21.9	21.9
.51-1.50	37	2840 (76.75)	160 (4.32)	980 (26.46)	1140 (30.81)	3980 (107.55)	71.3	4.0	24.6	28.6
1.51-2.50	33	2969 (89.96)	75 (2.27)	1230 (37.27)	1305 (39.54)	4503 (136.45)	64.6	1.6	27.3	28.9
2.51-3.50	12	2018 (168.16)	105 (8.75)	768 (64.00)	873 (72.75)	2891 (240.91)	69.8	3.6	26.5	30.19
3.51-5.00	14	3104 (221.71)	860 (61.42)	1703 (121.64)	2563 (183.07)	5872 (419.42)	52.8	14.6	29.0	43.64
5.01-7.50	7	1495 (213.57)	390 (55.71)	996 (142.28)	1386 (198.00)	2891 (413.00)	51.7	13.5	34.3	47.94
7.51-10.00	9	1375 (152.77)	935 (103.86)	2356 (261.77)	3291 (365.66)	4666 (518.44)	29.4	20.0	50.5	70.53
10.00 +	6	1335 (225.5)	1435 (239.16)	3470 (578.33)	4905 (817.5)	6240 (1040.00)	21.4	21.0	55.6	78.60
All Groups	200	16298 (81.49)	3960 (19.80)	11869 (59.34)	15829 (79.14)	32631 (163.15)	50.0	12.1	33.4	48.50

N.B. Figures in brackets show the mandays per HH.

Table 5.2 shows the pervasiveness of hired labour in the rural economy of Bangladesh. For the last three groups, the proportion of wage labour surpasses total family labour. The proportion of hiring in of permanent labour increases as we move to the higher land-owning groups. The proportions of income from agricultural wage labour were also quite substantial, 8.8% in village-I and 9.9% in village-2.

So neither the Chayanovian original hypothesis of complete absence of wage labour nor Diana Hunt's modified hypothesis of dominance of non-wage family unit do really hold good in the context of Bangladesh.

HYPOTHESIS 2:

Once we nullified hypothesis I, hypothesis 2 becomes questionable immediately. Our intimate discussions with the peasants about their production decisions revealed that rural households were indeed profit conscious and cost minimisers. Chayanov asserted that since the labour cost could not be inputed, the profit could not be calculated(as a capitalist entrepreneur would). But we found most rural households were guided by a rational comparison of differential gain and cost attributable to any of their production decisions. The rural households, although they did not have proper accounting procedures, did have in mind a traditional way of judging the profitability of any production decision. Thus in village-I, at least one-fifth of the total operated land was devoted to the cultivation of Jute in the sixties. But as the price of jute relative to rice fell steadily, the farmers changed their production decisions and by the early eighties not even 3% of the total operated land was found under jute cultivation. Jute, the most important exportable item for Bangladesh had falling demand in the international market and a farmer easily read that signal. The same thing happened when modern agricultural techniques, including the high-yielding seeds, began to spread in rural Bangladesh. After an initial hesitation, the farmers in general accepted the merits of irrigation, chemical fertilizer and other components of HYV technology. There were as many as seventeen power pumps in watering the paddy fields of village-I. The absence of irrigation technology in village-2 had nothing to do with the 'peasant motive'. The households in village-2 lacked capital and state

connection to bring in tube-wells to their villages. Many of its adjoining villages had installed irrigation pumps and benefited from the high yielding technology.

The general attitude of the poor peasantry is also changing pretty fast and they do not see themselves as'pure cultivators' only. They may opt for the occupation of wage labourer if the opportunity arises.

Even part of the middle peasantry in both the villages was found to be involved in the modern techniques of production and employing a substantial proportion of wage labourers. They did not produce only to consume. They very often think in terms of profit maximisation and become involved in commerce and trade activities.

The other part of the middle peasantry was seen to strive very hard to stick to their original position at least, if not better it. But economic forces are pulling them down and they are facing all the pressures of a disintegrating peasantry.

So our field investigation does not support Chayanovian hypothesis no.2

HYPOTHESIS 3.

Hypothesis 3 expects land to be in flexible supply to all households. If there be any short fall in any household, it can compensate that by renting in more land from others.

But as we have observed, most households in our study villages were starving for land. Both per household and per capita operated land has been declining consistently. As we shall seein Chapter 8, the rich households have been taking back their rented out land from the poorer peasantry and forcing them to join the ranks of wage labourers.

Table 5.3 points to the shrinking land-man ratios since 1951 in both our study villages.

TABLE 5.3

SHRINKING OPERATED LAND PER HOUSEHOLD/PER CAPITA

Name of the village	Operated land per hh (acres)			Operated land per capita (acres		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
Village-I	3.33	2.56	2.09	.81	.51	.35
Village-2	4.77	3.40	2.52	1.10	.73	.45

Table 5.3 portrays the pressure on land via growing population in both of our study villages. The per capita figures reveal an accute situation. Chayanov also hypothesised that occassional short-fall in the sown area would be matched by seasonal recourse to crafts and trade activities. But the opportunity for going into trade and crafts, with no capital in hand and in the face of stiff competition from manufacturing, is also very limited. In a situation like this, the only option left for them is to join the already overcrowded wage labour market.

In any case, our field investigation in two villages once more convinced us that the flexible supply of land in rural Bangladesh was a myth.

We have, then, begun to suggest that, on a basis of our evidence concerning the incidence of wage labour, rural Bangladesh is not a Chayanovian universe. We may now proceed to a more detailed testing of the Chayanovian hypotheses.

HYPOTHESIS 4:

Hypotheis 4 envisages a positive correlation between family size and sown area. In the specific context of Bangladesh we can take operated land (which takes care of mechanisims of land adjustment like

renting-in, renting-out, mortgaging etc) as a proxy for what was sown area in rural Russia. As Chayanov insisted, we have taken family size as the independent variable while constructing the following table, which predicts a direct relationship between family size and operated land.

TABLE 5.4

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY SIZE AND OPERATED LAND: 1980-81

FAMILY SIZE GROUPS	VILLAGE - 1			VILLAGE - 2		
	No. of members per household	Amount of operated land (acres)	Amount of operated land per Capita (acres)	No. of members per household	Amount of operated land per household (acres)	Amount of operated land per Capita (acres)
1 - 2.5	1.96	.56	.23	1.92	.69	.36
3 - 4.5	4.02	1.98	.42	3.78	1.75	.46
5 - 6.5	5.54	1.50	.32	5.44	1.65	.34
7 - 8.5	7.25	7.92	1.72	7.30	6.91	.82
9 +	10.76	6.43	.97	10.50	6.73	.66

Note: All children less than ten years have been taken as half of adult consumer.

Table 5.4 does not give us a very consistent relationship. But in the majority of the cases (three out of five) we get positive correlations between family size and average operated land per household and per capita. However, in two cases we notice a sudden breakdown in that relationship.

To be more specific, let us look into the relationship between c/w ratios (as defined in appendix A) and landholding size. The c/w ratio gives us the proxy for changing family size. While estimating land holding size we have taken not only operated land, but also owned and effectively controlled (net operated land left after making various rental adjustments). We first look into the relationship between the c/w ratio and operated land. Table 5.5 gives us that relationship.

TABLE 5.5

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN C/W AND OPERATED LAND

C/W RATIO GROUPS	VILLAGE - 1		VILLAGE - 2	
	No. of Household	Amount of operated land per household (acre)	No. of Household	Amount of operated land per household (acre)
1.00 - 1.50	17	1.11	2	0.59
1.51 - 2.00	34	1.38	11	1.63
2.01 - 2.50	41	1.64	12	3.27
2.51 - 3.00	42	2.28	22	1.70
3.01 - 3.00	20	2.67	7	2.28
3.51 - 4.00	12	2.80	15	2.44
4.01 - 4.50	14	2.68	7	2.01
4.51 - 5.00	5	1.10	2	13.33
5.01 +	15	3.61	23	3.78
All groups	200	2.09	101*	2.52

Note: C/W ratio = $\frac{\text{All members (adjusted for children by dividing them by 2)}}{\text{All male workers (10 - 64 years) - male students}}$

* 20 households who immigrated after 1972 from another district have been excluded while computing the C/W ratio for village 2.

As evidenced from Table 5.5 as the c/w ratio increases, average operated land per household increases consistently except in one case in village-I. But the relationship is not that consistent in village-2.

The ratio between the lowest and the highest c/w ratio is roughly 1.5 in both the villages. But the ratio between the corresponding operated land associated with the lowest and the highest c/w ratio groups are 1.3 for village-I and 1.6 for village-2. That means that the c/w ratio and operated land size did not vary at the same rate. Corresponding to the c/w ratio 4.51-5.00, the average operated land per household was recorded as 1.10 acres in village-1. But the preceding groups' operated land size was 2.84 acres .

For village 2, the relationship between the two variables is indeed erratic. While the c/w ratio varies consistently from 1.00 to 5.00 and above, the operated landholding sizes vary from group to group in different degree. In one case, the operated land jumps up to 13.33 acres only to fall again to 3.78 acres in the next step.

We get similar types of relationships in cases of owned and effective landholding sizes. Table 5.6 gives the detail.

TABLE 5.6

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN C/W AND OWNED/EFFECTIVE LANDS

C/W RATIO	VILLAGE - 1		VILLAGE - 2	
	Amount of owned cultivatable land (acres)	Amount of effective land (acres)	Amount of owned cultivatable land (acres)	Amount of effective land (acres)
1.00 - 1.50	.95	1.02	0.59	0.59
1.51 - 2.00	1.33	1.36	1.13	1.42
2.01 - 2.50	1.36	1.51	3.23	3.29
2.51 - 3.00	2.13	2.22	1.53	1.60
3.01 - 3.50	2.39	2.53	1.86	2.15
3.51 - 4.00	2.93	2.85	2.37	2.41
4.01 - 4.50	2.04	2.83	1.65	1.94
4.51 - 5.00	2.52	1.79	10.03	10.33
5.01 +	3.71	3.62	3.73	3.78
All groups	2.00	2.04	2.41	2.50

The nature of the correspondence between c/w ratio and landholding size (of different categories i.e. owned, operated and effective) is better demonstrated in the attached graphs (5i and 5ii).

Both in the tables and the graphs, Chayanovian hypothesis No.4 appears to be almost totally true in the case of village I and partially true in village 2. However, the relationship as predicted in the tables and graphs does not tell us anything about the direction of casuality. Chayanov always insisted that it is family size (hence the c/w ratio) which influences the landholding sizes. But this does not emerge clearly from the above discussion.

We can get almost an identical result if we change the columns and make landholding size the independent variables. Table 5.7 gives us the relationships between operated land groups and c/w ratios, while table 5.8 gives us the relationships between landholding groups and c/w ratios.

TABLE 5.7

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OPERATED LAND AND C/W RATIO

OPERATED LAND GROUPS (IN ACRES)	C/W RATIO	
	VILLAGE - 1	VILLAGE - 2
1. 0	2.77	3.19
2. .01 - .50	2.30	2.67
3. .51 - 1.50	2.75	2.63
4. 1.51 - 2.50	2.61	3.29
5. 2.51 - 3.50	2.59	3.42
6. 3.51 - 5.00	2.83	3.84
7. 5.01 - 7.50	2.77	3.54
8. 7.51 -10.00	2.80	2.42
9. 10.01 +	3.92	4.51
All groups	2.81	3.27

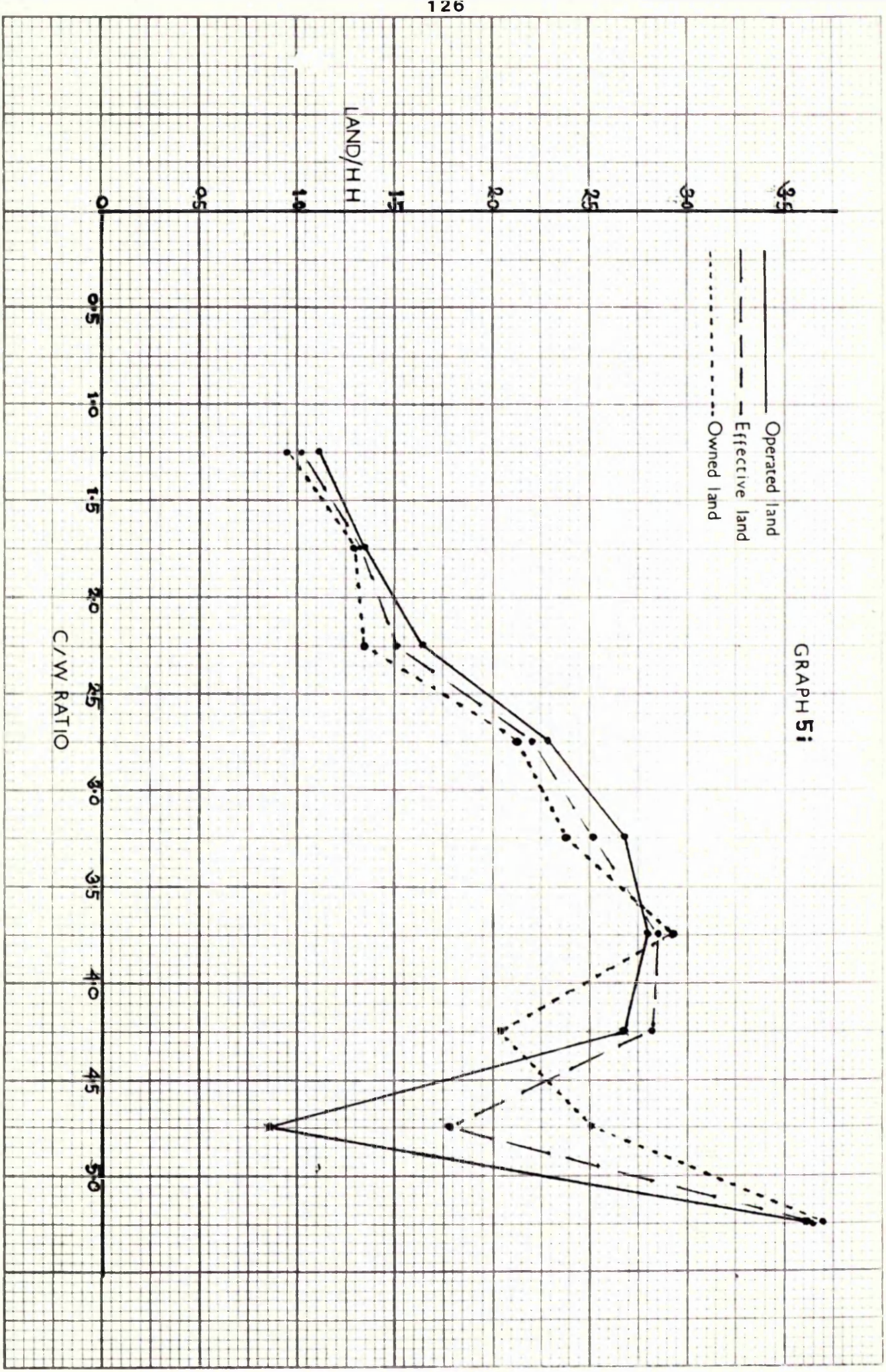
Table 5.7 indicates that there is no consistent relationship between operated land and c/w ratio. This is true for both the villages, though the fluctuation is wider in case of village-2. In both villages, while the size of the operated land groups increase consistently, the size of the c/w ratio does not increase accordingly. We notice ups and downs in the value of c/w ratio in most cases.

The same thing is true in the relationship between c/w ratios and land owning groups. Table 5.8 gives us that picture.

TABLE 5.8

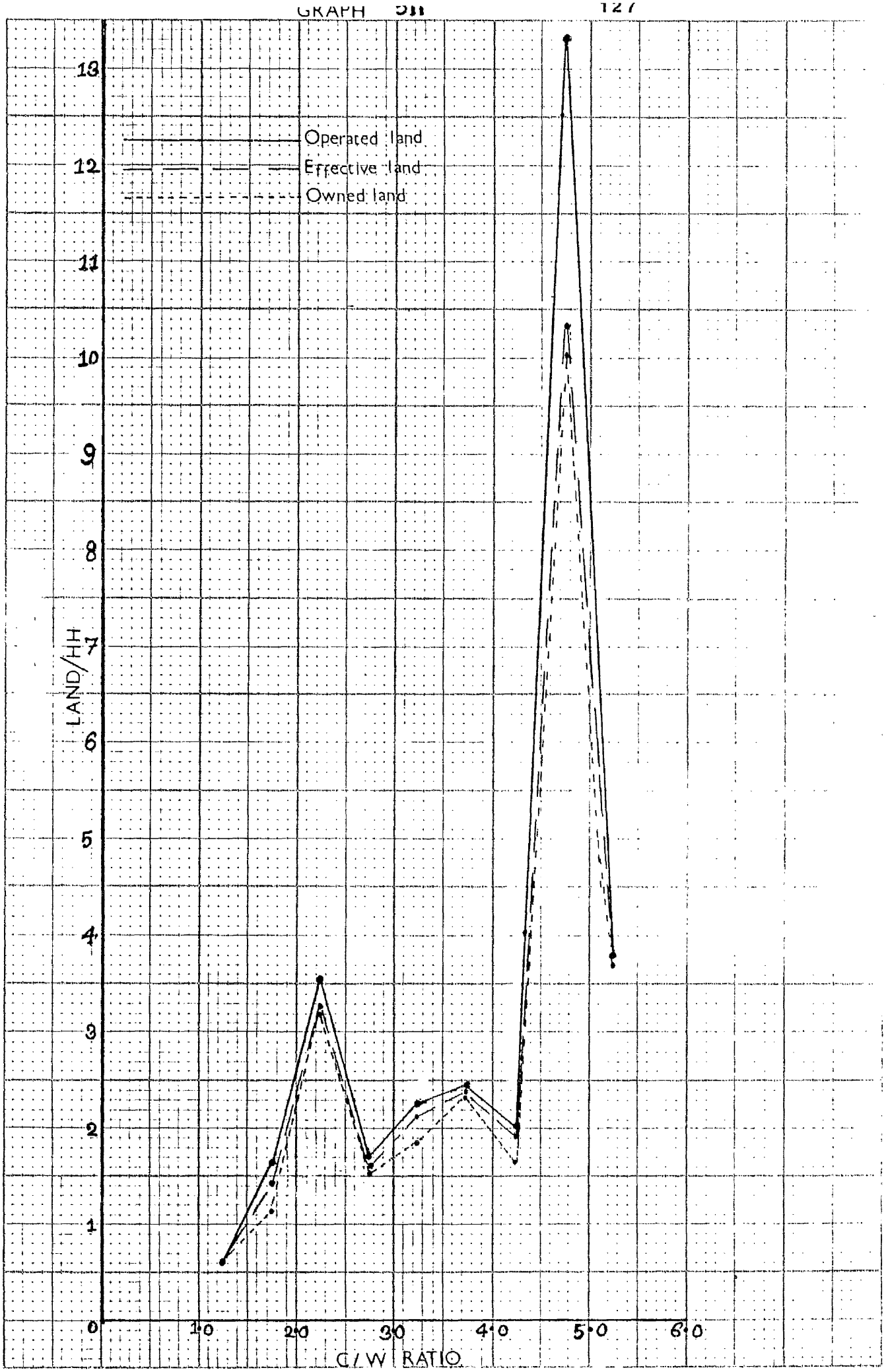
CORRELATIONS BETWEEN LANDOWNING GROUPS AND C/W RATIOS

Landowning Groups (in acres)	c/w Ratios	
	Village 1	Village 2
1. 0	2.76	2.90
2. .01-.50	2.58	2.88
3. .51-1.50	2.55	2.50
4. 1.51-2.50	2.55	4.22
5. 2.51-3.50	3.11	3.47
6. 3.51-5.00	2.72	3.43
7. 5.01-7.50	2.71	3.73
8. 7.51-10.00	2.94	3.00
9. 10.01+	3.92	4.36
ALL GROUPS	2.81	3.36


Operated land
Effective land
Owned land
LAND/H H
C/W RATIO
0
0·5
1·0
1·5
2·0
2·5
3·0
3·5
4·0
4·5
5·0

GRAPH 5i

GRAPH 511 127



As we can see, from table 5.8, there is no consistent relationship between the c/w ratios and land owning groups. In village-1, the c/w ratio for group I (with no land) is 2.76, while that for group 7 (owning 5.01-7.50 acres of land) is 2.71. The latter is less than the former. Similarly for village-2, the c/w ratio first decreases and then suddenly jumps to 4.22. There after it moves erratically.

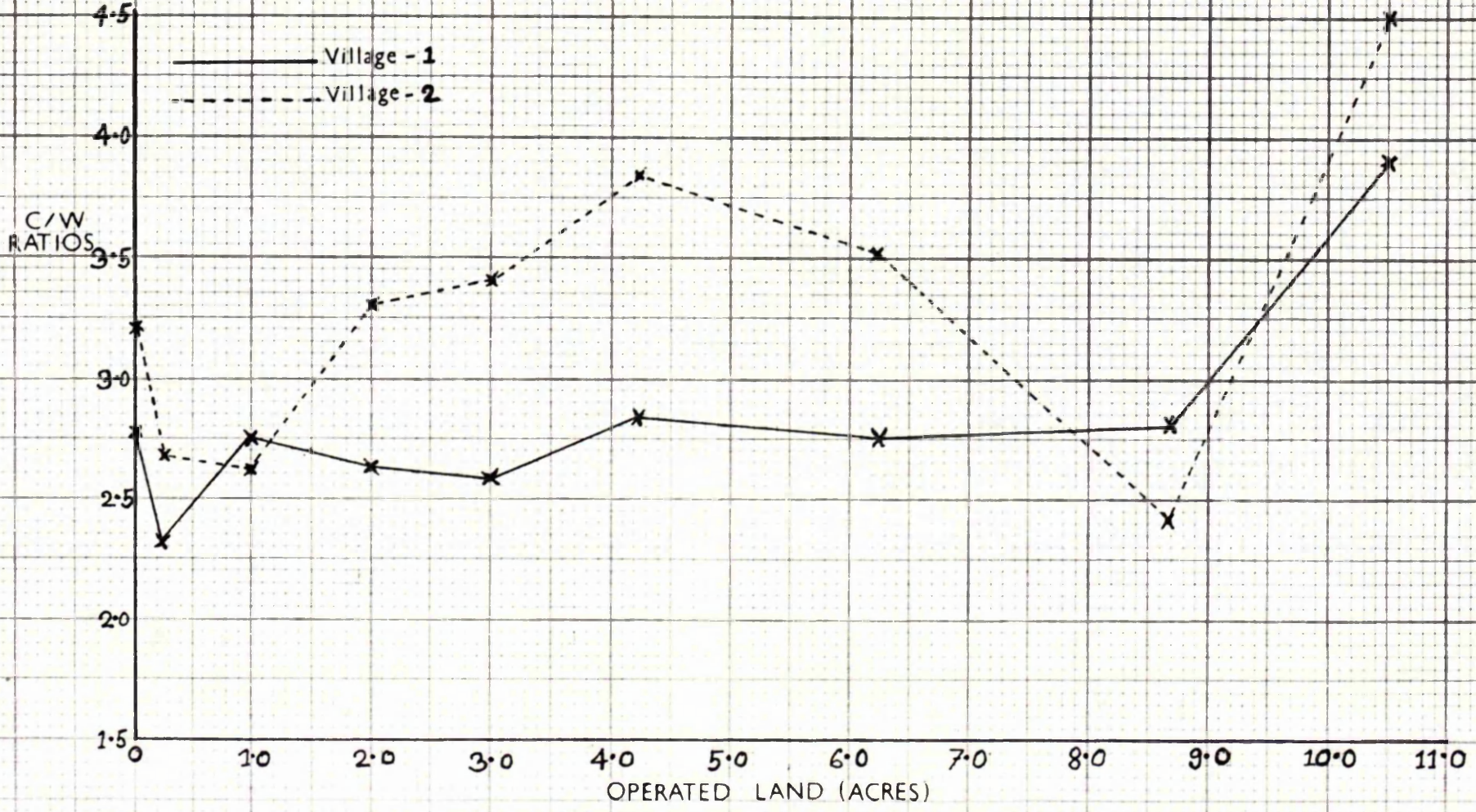
Graph 5iii demonstrates the relationship between operated land and c/w ratio and graph 5iv between owned land and c/w ratio for both villages.

Since we get almost similar pattern of relationship between c/w ratio (independent variable) and landholding size (dependent variable) and between landholding size (independent variable) and c/w ratio, we cannotcategorically say that family size influences the economic position of rural households in Bangladesh villages. In our participant observation as well we noticed that most of the large holdings had larger family size. The per capita consumption level for larger holdings(as we will see in chapter vii) was also higher than that of the smaller holdings. The smaller households had smaller family size as the infant mortality rate was found to be very high. Also the adult life expectation was lower for them. We would tend to agree with Patnaik (1979: 381) as regards the direction of causality i.e. from landholding size to the family size and not the other way round.

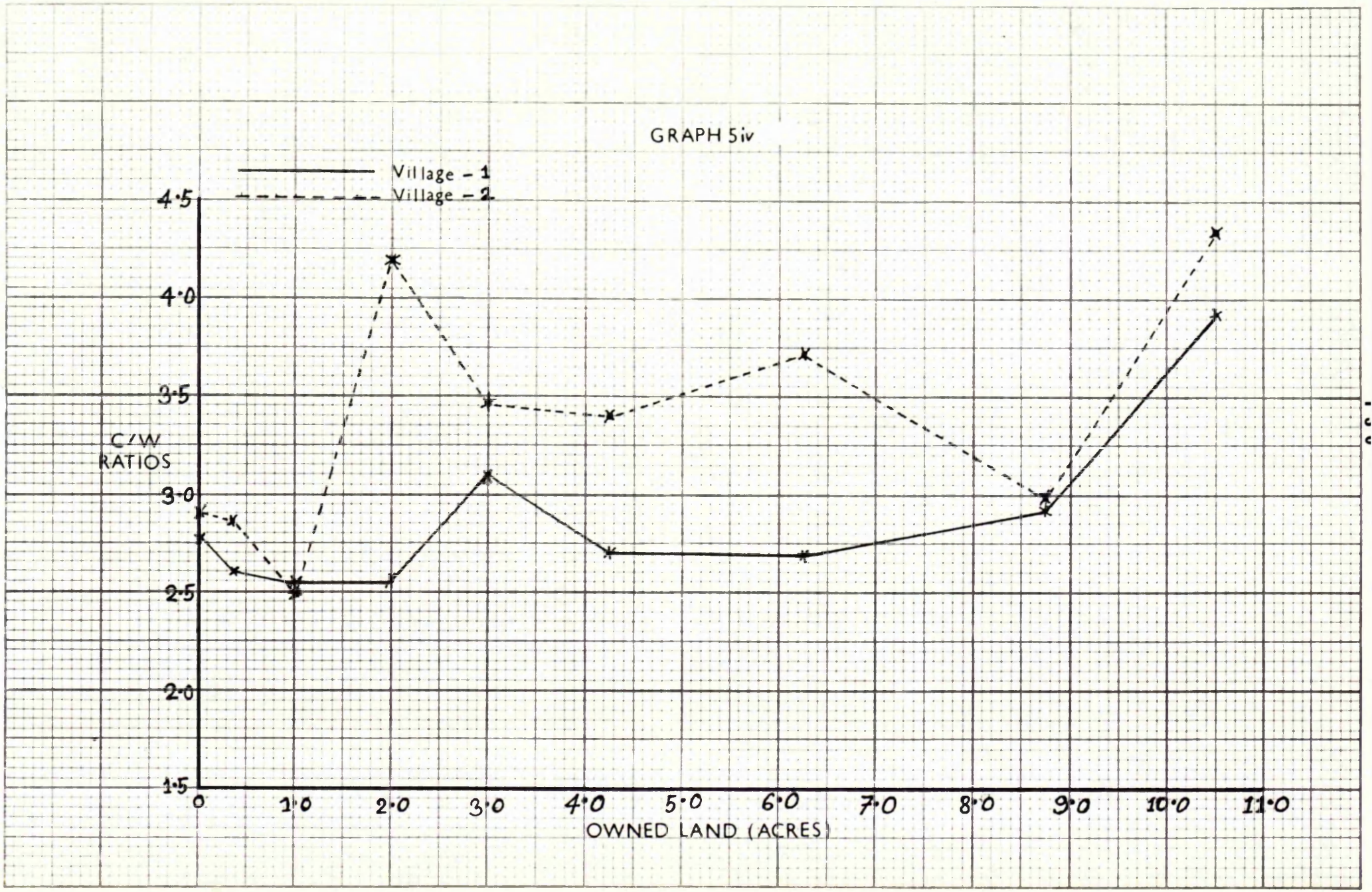
HYPOTHESIS: 5

Our field investigation, next did not fully support Chayanovian hypothesis No.5. We closely watched the labour utilization pattern of twenty pure cultivator households (ten from each village). Here, too, we did not get any consistent relationship. The c/w ratio did not always vary directly with the hours put in by the family concerned. Thus in village 1, household No.G34 headed by Shahidullah had only one worker. But he had four family members. The consumer-worker ratio of this household was 3. He had 2.5 acres of operated land. He worked very hard and on an average he used to work nine hours in the field daily during the

GRAPH 5iii


Village - 1
Village - 2
C/W RATIOS
4·5
4·0
3·5
3·0
2·5
2·0
1·5
0
1·0
2·0
3·0
4·0
5·0
6·0
7·0
8·0
9·0
10·0
11·0
OPERATED LAND (ACRES)

GRAPH 5iv


Village – 1
Village – 2
C/W RATIOS
4·5
4·0
3·5
3·0
2·5
2·0
1·5
0
1·0
2·0
3·0
4·0
5·0
6·0
7·0
8·0
9·0
10·0
11·0
OWNED LAND (ACRES)

peak season. In the off season he does not have much work to do. He works on an average 4 hours daily in the field and other household activities during the off peak season.

On the other hand, the c/w ratio of household numberG163, headed by Ibrahim Ali is 3.5. But Ibrahim Ali owns only 1 acre of land. Hypothesis 5 demands that he should work more than Shahidullah whose c/w ratio is less than his family. But in reality he could not get in more cultivated land through the rental market. He could finish his farm work by putting in only 6 hours daily. He very much wants to put in more labour. But he had insufficient land to make that possible. Consequently, he had to be satisfied with less production and less consumption. After talking to him closely we observed that he was under tremendous economic pressure. His vanity as a self-cultivating farmer prevented him from joining the labour market as a wage labourer when he finished his own farm work. But as the consumption pressure was building up, it would be quite difficult for him to refrain from doing so for long.

In some cases households with higher c/w ratios were found to put in more hours of labour on an average than others. But here again the deciding factor was not family size but the landholding size. Most of these larger families had larger holdings as well. Since they did not employ hired labourers they had to put in more hours of their own labour to cultivating the family holdings.

HYPOTHESIS 6:

This hypothesis has been particularly designed for a situation where there is land scarcity. In such a situation the Chayanovian effect comes via labour intensification on a particular piece of land. Chayanov, of course, specified a land abundant situation.

To test this hypothesis in the context of Bangladesh villages, we may see the variation of the c/w ratio and paddy output (as this is the most common crop in Bangladesh, occupying about 87% of the total crop area - BBS, 1977) per acre.

Table 5.9 gives us the relationship between the c/w ratio and output per acre and per worker.

TABLE 5.9

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN C/W RATIO AND OUTPUT/ACRE AND PER WORKER

C/W RATIO GROUPS	VILLAGE - 1		VILLAGE - 2	
	Output/Acre (Maunds)	Output/Worker (Maunds)	Output/Acre (Maunds)	Output/Worker (Maunds)
1. 1.00 - 1.50	24.21	10.23	20.00	5.85
2. 1.51 - 2.00	22.04	27.54	23.03	29.02
3. 2.01 - 2.50	21.98	38.21	21.59	35.26
4. 2.51 - 3.00	28.62	48.96	27.91	56.93
5. 3.01 - 3.50	26.57	59.62	23.62	53.88
6. 3.51 - 4.00	27.29	61.22	26.61	72.00
7. 4.01 - 4.50	34.52	33.25	28.93	34.35
8. 4.51 - 5.00	25.64	71.52	33.51	62.50
9. 5.01 +	29.28	29.14	20.45	27.15
All groups	24.05	45.63	22.01	41.39

Table 5.9 does not reveal a consistent relationship between the c/w ratio and output per acre or output per worker. In both the villages, while the c/w ratio increases consistently, we observe an inconsistent change in the other two variables. The irregular relationship that we notice in this case does not support our Chayanovian hypothesis No.6.

We also get a disaggregated view when we rearrange the table by making land size the independent variable. Table 5.10 gives us that view.

TABLE 5.10

VARIATIONS OF C/W RATIO, OUTPUT/ACRE AND OUTPUT/WORKER

OPERATED LAND GROUPS (ACRES)	VILLAGE - 1			VILLAGE - 2		
	C/W ratio	Paddy output/ acre (in maunds)	Paddy output/ worker (in maunds)	C/W ratio	Paddy output acre (in maunds)	Paddy output/ worker (in maunds)
1. 0	2.77	0	0	3.09	0	0
2. .01 - .50	2.30	19.8	6.1	2.67	22.5	14.4
3. .51 - 1.50	2.75	26.0	33.3	2.63	19.0	14.2
4. 1.51 - 2.50	2.61	22.0	38.7	3.29	19.1	31.4
5. 2.51 - 3.50	2.59	23.5	46.0	3.42	20.4	59.9
6. 3.51 - 5.00	2.83	23.8	76.4	3.84	18.4	85.7
7. 5.01 - 7.50	2.77	22.5	57.3	3.45	19.2	65.1
8. 7.51 -10.00	2.80	28.6	142.6	2.42	18.0	59.8
9. 10.01 +	2.92	21.3	259.9	4.51	18.0	143.8
All groups	2.81	23.41	53.36	3.27	19.32	49.80

One does note from table 5.10 that the paddy output per acre and c/w ratio do not always vary in the same direction. Thus, for village I, we see that the c/w ratio increases from 2.30 (group 2) to 2.75 (group), the corresponding output per acre also increases from 19.8 maunds to 26.0 maunds. But the trend does not continue. From group 3, if we go ahead to, say group 6, we find that the c/w ratio increases to 2.83 from 2.75, but that output per acre drops to 23.8 maunds contrary to the hypothesis. In village 2, output per acre oscillates within the range of 18 to 22.5 maunds, while the c/w ratios vary almost two fold, from 2.63 to 4.51. The direction of the variation of output per acre and c/w ratio for village-2 is also not the same.

Again, if we look at output per worker, we also find a highly disaggregated and inconsistent trend. For example, in village 1, corresponding to c/w ratio 2.30 (group 2), output per worker is 6.1 maunds. But for the same village, in group 8, while the c/w ratio increases to 2.80 (a change of +21%), corresponding output per worker has increased to 142.6 maunds (a change of +2237%). Again if we compare the two ratios between group 3 and group 8, we see that while output per worker has changed by +328%, the c/w ratio has changed only +2%. Village-2 presents us with even more inconsistent relationships.

The foregoing implies that given the socio-economic constraints in a Bangladesh village, an increase in the number of consumers alone does not lead to higher output per acre or per worker. Chayanov nowhere takes account of the existence of such constraints.

HYPOTHESIS 8:

Hypothesis 8 says that value of output (or agricultural income) will vary positively with the consumption of the family.

In the context of Bangladesh villages, we first calculated the c/w ratio for each family. We then calculated the agricultural income of each of these families. While calculating agricultural income, we have computed values of all crops produced poultry, livestock, and other ancilliary incomes deriving from other activities related to land and agriculture (see Appendix B). We then distributed c/w ratios at a certain frequency interval and computed the average agricultural income per family and per capita. The results are presented in table 5.11.

TABLE 5.11

C/W RATIO AND AGRICULTURAL INCOME

C/W RATIO GROUPS	VILLAGE - 1			VILLAGE - 2		
	No. of households	Agricultural income per household (in Taka)	Agricultural income per Capita (in Taka)	No. of households	Agricultural income per household (in Taka)	Agricultural income per Capita (in Taka)
1. 1.00 - 1.50	17	4327.47	786.83	2	3227.51	597.51
2. 1.51 - 2.00	33	6683.78	1215.23	11	4722.20	858.58
3. 2.01 - 2.50	41	6405.00	1085.59	12	5202.12	1040.00
4. 2.51 - 3.00	42	9079.00	1565.34	22	4271.54	854.20
5. 3.01 - 3.50	20	12192.25	2138.99	7	7224.00	1389.23
6. 3.51 - 4.00	12	11503.00	2130.18	15	8448.56	1561.65
7. 4.01 - 4.50	14	11303.57	2132.74	7	8334.00	1515.27
8. 4.51 - 5.00	5	8556.00	1711.20	2	7526.21	1409.40
9. 5.01 +	16	15544.06	2826.19	23	12212.01	2180.71
All groups	200	10567.09	1921.29	101	5935.73	1099.21

Table 5.11 does not reveal a consistently positive correlation. In village-I with the consistent rise in c/w ratios, agricultural income both per household and per capita, does not always vary in the same direction. Thus while per household and per capita agricultural income for group 2 are tk 6683.78 and tk 1215.23 respectively, the figures for group 3 (a higher c/w ratio group) drop to tk 6405.00 and tk 1085.59 respectively. Average agricultural incomes then rise consistently but only to fall again to tk 8556.00 per household and tk 1711.20 per capita in group 8. We notice a steep rise in group 9 again. The changes are equally uneven in case of village-2.

Even if we replace the c/w ratio by operated landholding size as the independent variable, we do not notice a consistent relationship between the c/w ratio and agricultural income either. This is clear from table 5.12.

TABLE 5.12

OPERATED LANDHOLDING SIZE, C/W RATIO AND AGRICULTURAL INCOME

OPERATED LANDHOLDING SIZES (IN ACRES)	VILLAGE - 1			VILLAGE - 2		
	C/W ratio	Annual Agricultural income/ household (TK)	Annual Agricultural income/ Capita (TK)	C/W ratio	Annual Agricultural income/ household (TK)	Annual Agricultural income/ Capita (TK)
1. 0	2.77	5638	1059	3.19	4345	956
2. .01 - .05	2.30	4089	771	2.67	4196	807
3. .51 - 1.50	2.75	4536	840	2.63	4362	826
4. 1.51 - 2.50	2.61	6041	1098	2.29	4640	875
5. 2.51 - 3.50	2.59	10064	1829	3.42	6210	1172
6. 3.51 - 5.00	2.83	15197	2666	3.84	7329	1383
7. 5.01 - 7.50	2.77	25538	4480	3.45	10421	1929
8. 7.51 - 10.00	2.80	34313	5916	2.42	13230	2405
9. 10.00 +	3.92	48291	8185	4.51	29551	5095
All groups	2.81	11926	1798	3.27	5428	10124

Here we have presented three variables in order. As we can observe, there is no consistent relationship between the c/w ratio and agricultural income. While the c/w ratio varies irregularly, we observe a consistent rise in agricultural income except in one case (i.e. the case of group I). This is true in both the villages. One can, however, note a positive correlation between landsize and the agricultural income. Excepting group 1, agricultural income (both per household and per capita) and operated landholding size vary in the same direction. This finding, in fact, supports Patnaik's notion that it is land size and not family size which determines the relative economic position of a family (Patnaik, 1979:381).

HYPOTHESIS 9: THE LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS:

This hypothesis has two aspects - (a) the static aspect and (b) the dynamic aspect. The static part of the hypothesis postulates that families in existence for a smaller number of years(i.e. the age of the family) shall vary positively with the c/w ratio at any point in time. The dynamic part of the hypothesis, on the other hand, takes into account the growth of the family, ageing of the children, the splitting of the family etc. The former may be tested by cross-sectional data and the latter by time series data.

(a) Static Analysis:

We computed c/w ratios and the age of the family for all the households we investigated. Our average and disaggregated findings are as follows:

TABLE 5.13

AGE AND C/W RATIO

VILLAGE-1: GOPINATHPUR

Consumer/Worker ratio range	No. of Household	Total age of the family (HH)	Average age of a H.H.	Age of families (in years)											
				0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-23	24-30	31-40	41-50	51+	Total
1.00 - 1.50	17	302	17.76	2	1	3	2	3	-	1	1	3	1	-	17
1.51 - 2.00	33	582	17.63	5	4	2	2	1	5	3	6	3	1	1	33
2.01 - 2.50	41	713	17.39	7	2	4	5	3	2	3	10	4	1	-	41
2.51 - 3.00	42	700	16.66	7	4	4	9	-	2	5	5	5	-	1	42
3.01 - 3.50	20	269	13.45	4	1	4	6	1	1	-	1	-	2	-	20
3.51 - 4.00	12	185	15.41	2	2	-	2	-	2	2	1	1	-	-	12
4.01 - 4.50	14	257	18.35	1	-	2	3	1	1	2	2	1	1	-	14
4.51 - 5.00	5	113	22.60	-	1	2	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	5
5.01+	16*	346	22.75	-	-	1	1	3	-	3	1	4	-	-	13
	200	3467	17.33	28	14	22	30	12	14	19	28	21	7	2	197

* including 3 cases where there is no male worker.

TABLE 5.14

AGE AND C/W RATIO

VILLAGE-2: HATSHAHAR

Consumer/Worker ratio range	No. of H.H.	Total age of the family (HH)	Average age of a H.H.	Age of families (in years)											
				0 - 3	4 - 6	7 - 9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-23	24-30	31-40	41-50	51+	Total
1.00 - 1.50	8	31	15.50	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	2	1	-	-	8
1.51 - 2.00	11	143	13.00	2	1	1	2	1	-	3	-	1	-	-	11
2.01 - 2.50	12	144	12.00	1	3	1	-	2	2	3	-	-	-	-	12
2.51 - 3.00	22	339	15.40	1	2	5	2	3	1	6	-	1	1	-	22
3.01 - 3.50	7	95	13.57	1	1	2	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	7
3.51 - 4.00	15	157	11.21	1	5	2	2	2	1	2	-	-	-	-	15
4.01 - 4.50	7	56	8.00	1	2	2	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	7
4.51 - 5.00	2	60	30.00	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	2
5.01+	17*	468	20.35	1	-	1	3	1	1	2	2	1	3	-	15
	101	1493	14.78	8	14	15	11	10	7	19	5	5	5	-	99

Note: Data of inception for 20 families are not available.

* including 2 families with no male worker.

Tables 5.13 and 5.14 representing villages I and 2 respectively do not reveal consistent correlations between c/w ratios and years of existence of the households. Thus while the average age of a household for the group with c/w ratio 1.00-1.50 is 17.76 years, the same for the group with higher c/w ratio (3.01-3.50) is 13.45 years in village-I. In more disaggregated form; we notice, in the same village, at least six households in group 1 (c/w ratio ranging between 1.00-1.500) who have been in existence for at least 19 years, one of them for more than 40 years. In group 1, we notice only one third of the total household of this group who havebeen in existence for less than nine years. These are the families who support the Chayanovian notion of a small c/w ratio. But the remaining two third indeed negate the hypothesis. Similarly, in the group with the highest c/w ratio (i.e. 5.10+) we find quite a number of households of a relatively younger age. We find similar inconsistent results in the case of village-2.

So far, as our cross-sectional data reveal, we really do not get consistent and positive correlations between c/w ratios and other economic variables. The relationship is very often uneven.

(b) Dynamic Analysis:

The dynamic aspects of the Chayanovian hypothesis assumes that the c/w ratio increases up to a point of time and then starts falling as some of the children join the workforce. The land size adjusts itself to these variations of the c/w ratio. But this trend again breaks down when the family splits up as adult members form their own households.

With respect to our study villages, we have assumed that a couple have their first issue after two years of marriage and a child normally starts doing household work at about 10-12 years of age[1].

1. See Cain, M.T. (1977)

The hypothesis can be broken down in order to test it in the context of Bangladesh villages:

(i) If households are distributed according to their years of existence (i.e. the years since their inception) at a certain frequency interval and in each case corresponding c/w ratios are computed and their percentage changes observed, one will notice:

(a) the c/w ratio shall change in a positive direction up to the 10-12 years group;

(b) The amount of positive change shall be relatively higher in successive groups as one moves from the '0' years group to the 10-12 year group.

(c) After reaching the 10-12 years group, the c/w ratio shall start to decline and as age matures the magnitude of the negative change shall be higher in the successive groups.

The underlying assumption is that when the age of the household is less than 12 years, there are more consumers than workers. But after about 12 years of existence, a household may expect to have a son of ten years old joining the workforce. The other assumption behind the hypothesis is that a peasant household positively adjusts its land, labour, output, income equations with the growth of the c/w ratio (i.e. the dependency burden).

The best way to test the hypothesis outlined above is to identify the nuclear households (with no children) at the time of inception. One can then select those nuclear households which have been in existence for at least 31 years and have gone through different changes of c/w ratios and landholding sizes. In the case of these households as well, one should observe a positive relation initially (i.e. the c/w ratio rises as the household matures and simultaneously its landholding will also increase). But at later dates, after at least 12 years of existence, the c/w ratio should start falling and so should land per household fall (as land will be parcelled out to the disintegrated new families).

To test these, dynamic hypotheses in the context of our study villages, let us examine 5.15 and 5.16. The tables have been consturcted by taking age of the households as the independent variable. C/W ratios and land have been taken as dependent variables.

TABLE 5.15

AVERAGE C/W RATIO AND LAND DISTRIBUTION: VILLAGE -1

AGE GROUPS OF H.H. (Years)	No. of H.H.		C/W Ratio Average		Owned Cultivable Land/ HH (in acres)		Operated Land/HH (in acres)		Effective Land/HH (in acres)	
	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981
0-3	27	27	2.39	2.70	1.33	1.29	.82	1.42	1.06	1.37
			(12.97)		(-3)		(+73.17)		(+29.24)	
4-6	14	14	2.09	2.69	.50	1.40	.69	1.50	.50	1.46
			(28.7)		(+180)		(+117.39)		(+192)	
7-9	22	22	2.70	3.16	1.83	1.81	2.04	1.57	2.01	1.76
			(17.03)		(-1.09)		(+ 23.03)		(- 12.83)	
10-12	32	31	2.60	3.12	1.20	1.62	1.44	1.75	1.34	1.66
			(20.50)		(+35)		(+21.52)		(+23.88)	
13-15	13	13	2.25	3.41	1.88	1.32	2.06	1.76	2.00	1.70
			(51.55)		(-29.78)		(-14.56)		(-15)	
16-18	16	14	2.19	2.86	1.98	1.70	2.41	2.07	2.26	1.94
			(30.59)		(-14.14)		(-14.1)		(-14.15)	
19-23	18	19	2.87	3.27	1.91	2.42	2.10	2.88	2.03	2.63
			(13.93)		(+26.7)		(+37.14)		(+29.55)	
24-30	27	27	2.48	2.83	2.35	2.09	2.36	2.25	2.31	2.24
			(14.11)		(-11.06)		(-4.61)		(+3.03)	
31-40	20	21	2.26	3.46	3.86	3.26	3.79	3.15	3.80	3.20
			(53.09)		(-15.66)		(-16.88)		(-15.75)	
41-50	7	7	2.35	3.02	2.14	4.00	2.64	3.54	2.46	3.74
			(28.51)		(86.91)		(+34.09)		(+52.03)	
51+	2	2	2	2.29	.99	6.09	1.99	6.09	1.40	6.00
			(14.5)		(+515.15)		(+215 .78)		(+328.57)	
All Group	198*	194	2.19	2.93	1.87	3.03	1.84	2.13	1.92	2.09

Note: * We have excluded 2 households for the inception period and 3 for 1981 with C/W∞ for avoiding averaging problem.

Figures within bracket indicate % change.

TABLE 5.16

AVERAGE C/W RATIO AND LAND DISTRIBUTION: VILLAGE -2

AGE GROUPS OF H.H. (Years)	No. of H.H.		C/W Ratio Average		Owned Cultivable Land/ HH (in acres)		Operated Land/HH (in acres)		Effective Land/HH (in acres)	
	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981
0-3	9	8	3.33 (6.9)	3.36	2.31 (-29.87)	1.62	2.46 (-10.56)	2.20	2.38 (-20.58)	1.89
4-6	14	14	3.03 (12.21)	3.40	2.40 (-39.58)	1.45	2.35 (-33.61)	1.56	2.25 (-31.55)	1.54
7-9	13	13	2.58 (44.57)	3.75	1.73 (-31.79)	1.18	1.66 (-27.71)	1.20	1.70 (-24.11)	1.29
10-12	12	11	2.64 (46.96)	3.88	1.42 (+ 9.85)	1.56	1.60 (+33.12)	2.13	1.53 (+35.29)	2.07
13-15	10	10	2.75 (31.63)	3.62	2.43 (-12.75)	2.12	2.18 (+13.76)	2.48	2.25 (+5.77)	2.38
16-18	7	6	2.57 (15.95)	2.98	7.30 (-37.00)	4.54	5.65 (-20.53)	4.49	6.66 (-31.23)	4.58
19-23	16	16	2.36 (35.59)	3.20	1.34 (+66.41)	2.23	1.46 (+56.16)	2.28	1.40 (+57.14)	2.20
24-30	5	5	2.40 (80.00)	4.32	2.40 (+292.91)	9.43	3.57 (+157.42)	9.19	3.57 (+157.5)	9.38
31-40	6	5	2.08 (73.55)	3.61	3.61 (+18.83)	4.29	2.71 (+66.42)	4.51	3.13 (+40.89)	4.41
41-50	5	4	2.20 (160.0)	5.72	12.70 (+16.77)	14.83	8.81 (+61.06)	14.19	10.41 (+43.61)	14.95
Total:	97*	93	2.64	3.52	2.98	3.01	2.09	2.49	2/83	3.13

Note: *We have information for 101 households at the time of inception. Of the 101 HH, 4 HH have C/W ∞ , which we excluded to avoid averaging problem.

In 1981, C/W for 3HH were found to be ∞ . We left them accordingly.

Figures within bracket indicate % change.

We observe from tables 5.15 and 5.16 that:

Part 'a' of Chayanov's dynamic hypothesis holds good for both villages. C/W ratios change in positive direction in both villages up to the 10-12 years of age of the households.

Part 'b' of the hypothesis, however, is not always supported by our data. This part of the hypothesis demands that the magnitude of the positive change shall always increase successively. In village-1, as can be seen from table 5.15, the magnitude of the change fluctuates widely. Thus recently created households belonging to 0-3 years age group witnessed a positive change of 12.97% in their average c/w ratio. The next group of households (belonging to 4-6 years of age) also witnessed a positive change in c/w ratio by +28.7%. So far part 'b' has been supported. But in the group after (i.e. 7-9 years) we notice a drop in the magnitude of the positive change. This time it is+17.03%. Therefore, we notice a highly irregular pattern of change. In village-2, part 'b' of the hypothesis appears stronger than in village-1. Here the c/w ratio always changes in a positive direction and the magnitude of the positive change increases continuously in most cases except in one or two cases. Of course, an exception like that causes a breakdown in the chain of whole arguement.

Part 'c' of the hypothesis postulates that after crossing the 10-12 years range (around which time the first child, if he is a son, becomes about 10 years old and begins to participate in agricultural work), the c/w ratio shall begin to decline steadily. The percentage of the decrease in c/w ratio shall be greater in absolute term successively. But we get no support for this part of the hypothesis from our data. As we can see in table 5.15 and 5.16, the c/w ratios for all age groups of households have increased successively and the percentage change in c/w ratio has never been negative for any group. In fact, in village-2, the c/w ratio for groups following the cut-off group (i.e. 10-12 years) has never fallen below 2.64, the original c/w ratio of the households in 10-12 years group at the inception.

The Chayanovian dynamic hypothesis also suggests that landholding size shall positively adjust to the variations of c/w ratios. But as tables 5.15 and 5.16 suggest, c/w ratios and landholding size per household do not always vary in the same direction, between two points of reference i.e. the time of inception and 1981. Village-I, while c/w ratios change in positive direction between the two times for all age groups of households, average landholding does not change in a positive way. Owned cultivable land per household changes in the positive direction in five cases (groups: 2, 4, 7, 10 and 11). In the case of operated land and effective land, we observe at least three cases of negative change. For effective land size, the change is positive in seven cases. So we observe the variations in the percentage change for all categories of land quite unevenly. For village 2, we get a similar picture. The land does <u>not</u> really adjust to the changing c/w ratios.

So far we have discussed the relationship between the c/w ratio and land sizes for all households. But strictly speaking, the Chayanovian dynamic hypothesis is suited to those households which start their families without any extra consumer (i.e. as nuclear families with c/w ratio of 2).

We have conducted a similar exercise for all those households who reported as nuclear families at the time of their inception. Table 5.17 gives the details.

TABLE 5.17

AVERAGE C/W RATIO AND LAND DISTRIBUTION FOR THE NUCLEAR HHs

Village Number	Age Group of Households	No. of H.H.	C/W Ratio/HH		Own Cultivated Land/HH		Operated Land/HH		Effective Land/HH	
			Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981	Inception	1981
Village: I	0-5	13	2	2.89	.47	1.42	.49	1.49	.47	1.48
			(44.5)		(202.12)		(204.08)		(214.89)	
	6-10	13	2	2.62	.81	.90	.98	1.12	.91	1.03
			(31.00)		(11.11)		(14.28)		(13.81)	
	11-20	22	2	3.61	1.05	.97	1.36	1.17	1.12	1.08
			(80.50)		(-7.61)		(-13.97)		(49.05)	
	21-30	11	2	2.78	1.98	2.43	2.20	2.44	2.09	2.55
			(39.00)		(22.72)		(10.90)		(22.00)	
	31+	15	2	3.71	3.20	3.29	3.23	3.11	3.22	3.19
			(85.5)		(2.81)		(-3.71)		(-0.93)	
	All Groups	74	2	3.20	1.48	1.71	1.65	1.78	1.58	1.77
			(60.00)		(15.54)		(7.87)		(12.02)	
Village: II	0-5	7	2	2.92	1.10	.74	1.55	1.38	1.38	1.18
			(46.00)		(-32.72)		(-10.96)		(-14.49)	
	6-10	7	2	3.00	2.11	1.60	1.97	3.19	2.04	1.70
			(50.00)		(-24.17)		(61.92)		(-16.66)	
	11-20	11	2	3.75	2.04	1.81	2.19	1.91	2.15	3.45
			(87.50)		(-11.27)		(-12.78)		(60.46)	
	21-30	4	2	3.77	3.28	11.00	3.45	10.37	3.37	10.60
			(88.75)		(235.36)		(200.57)		(214.54)	
	31+	3	2	3.83	1.82	3.03	1.66	3.24	1.66	3.26
			(91.5)		(66.48)		(95.18)		(96.38)	
	All Groups	32	2	3.36	1.99	2.89	2.11	3.15	2.06	3.45
			(68.0)		(45.22)		(49.28)		(67.47)	

Note: Figures in the bracket indicate % changes.
HH = Household

From the nuclear household table (5.17) we find the following trends:

(i) Both for village-1 and village-2, the c/w ratio changes in a positive direction for all households. For village-1, the % change does not always increase successively. We see some fall as well. For village 2, the percentage change increases successively for all groups. But for the Chayanovian peasantry, we would expect the c/w ratio to rise first successively and then fall continuously till it reaches the number 2. The percentage change in landholding (all varieties) does not always follow the direction of the change in c/w ratio. While we did not notice any change in the value of c/w in a negative direction, we came across a number of negative changes in the landholding sizes.

The nucelar families, examined for two periods (i.e. between inception and 1981), also do not give any concrete indication of Chayanovian characteristics.

To bring further dynamic aspects into our analysis, we may single out those nuclear households which became independent households at least 31 years ago. We do this to notice a three-point comparison of the c/w ratio and corresponding land position of these households (i.e. between 1951, 1972 and 1981).

We have collected information for the years 1951 (approximately) 1972 and 1981 for all these nuclear households. We have fifteen such households in village-1 and 3 in village-2.

The comparative information for the three cut-off periods is presented in table 5.18.

TABLE 5.18

DYNAMIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AVERAGE C/W AND LANDSIZE FOR NUCLEAR HOUSEHOLDS:

INCEPTION TO 1981

VILLAGE NUMBER	ITEMS	INCEPTION	1951	1972	1981
Village-1	1. Average age of the HH (in years)	0	9.33	30.33	43.21
	2. C/W ratio % change in 2	2 (16.00)	2.32 (46.55)	3.40 (9.11)	3.71
	3. Owned cultivable land (in acres) % change in 3	3.20 (8.12)	3.46 (2.89)	3.56 (7.58)	3.29
	4. Operated land (in acres) % change in 4	3.23 (2.16)	3.30 (1.21)	3.34 (-6.88)	3.11
	5. Effective land % change in 5	3.22 (3.41)	3.33 (4.50)	3.48 (-8.33)	3.19
Village-2	1. Average age of the HH (in years)	0	9	30	40
	2.C/W ratio % change in 2	1.82 (37.36)	2.50 (76.80)	4.42 (-13.34)	3.83
	3. Owned cultivable land % change in 3	1.82 (-54.94)	.82 (267.01)	3.01 (0.66)	3.03
	4. Operated land (in acre) % change in 4	1.66 (32.53)	2.20 (20.90)	2.66 (21.80)	3.24
	5. Effective land % change in 5	1.66 (20.48)	2.00 (41.00)	2.82 (15.60)	3.26

If we follow table 5.18 closely, we do not get proof of the Chayanovian assertions made in the context of 'demographic differentiation'. For village-1, the average c/w ratio and the corresponding land size of these particular 15 nuclear families (again on an average 9.33, 30.33 and 43.21 years old at the three cut-off points of 1951, 1972 and 1981) for three periods have been arranged side by side. The consumer-worker ratio on average has been continuously rising although the magnitude of the percentage change between two subsequent cut off points is not always similar. The c/w ratio has changed by 16% from inception to 1951, by 46.55% between 1951 and 1972 and by 9.11% between 1972-1981. If Chayanov were correct, the c/w ratio would have fallen subsequently. Anyway the c/w ratio of 1972 could never be greater than that of 1951. But in village-1, for all age groups, the c/w ratio in 1972 was greater than that of 1951, a clear violation of the Chayanovian rule.

In village-2, also, the c/w ratio did not change as the Chayanovian hypothesis would demand.

Again, when we look at the percentage change in the land distribution (all categories), it does not tally with the corresponding change in the c/w ratio. Let us examine the pattern of change in operated land (which almost resembles Russian sown area) for both villages. In village-1, whereas the c/w ratio changes by 16%, operated land changes by only about 2% between the inception period and 1981. Between 1951 and 1972, the former changes by about 46%, but the latter changes only by 1%. Between 1972 and 1981, the former changes by about 9%, the latter changes by about -7%. In village-2, also, we do not observe much consistency in the percentage change in the two variables.

CASE STUDIES:

Besides these average findings, we also looked very carefully into the structural changes of a few households. We present these findings in the following case studies:

Case Study 1:

Sadar Ali, son of the late Nizam Ali Mondal was 45 in 1981. He became the head of the household (No. G-99) in 1956. He was newly married and had no children at the time of inception of his household. He started his household with 3.5 acres of land (owned) which he inherited from his father. His father had 20 acres of land in 1951 when he and his three other brothers were living in the joint family. By 1972, he had two children aged 8 and 6. His first child died when he was one. By giving half equivalent to each child, we found the c/w ratio of this household as 3 in 1972. When the second son grew up in the mid-seventies his c/w ratio fell to 1.75. By 1981, Sadar Ali's daughter has been married. But by now he had another son. So his c/w ratio did not change. But his land size did not change in the same direction as the c/w ratio. Although his c/w ratio increased by 50% in 1972, his total landholding in fact declined to 3 acres. Again although his c/w ratio remained steady at 1.75 throughout the late seventies his land size has been squeezed to 1.00. He lost more than an acre of his cultivable land during the famine of 1974 as village-1 was hit very hard by this famine. He lost the rest of his land in the later years as he became heavily indebted.

Case Study II

Hazrat Ali Fakir became the head of his household (G-28) in 1952. His c/w ratio was 2 at that time. He owned 12 acres of land in 1952. His c/w ratio rose steadily during the fifties and sixties. He had no sons. But by 1972 he had 4 daughters, two of whom were more than 12 years of age. So his c/w ratio was 5 in 1972. Since he had no supporting hands, he had to depend on himself. And consumption pressure forced him to sell off some of his land. By 1972 he had about 6 acres of land. The pressure continued and he had 3 more children by 1981. But two of his daughters have already been married. So his c/w ratio became 6.5. But his land size has declined to 1.75 acres. Hence in this particular household, we did not see the increase in land simultaneously with the increase in c/w ratio.

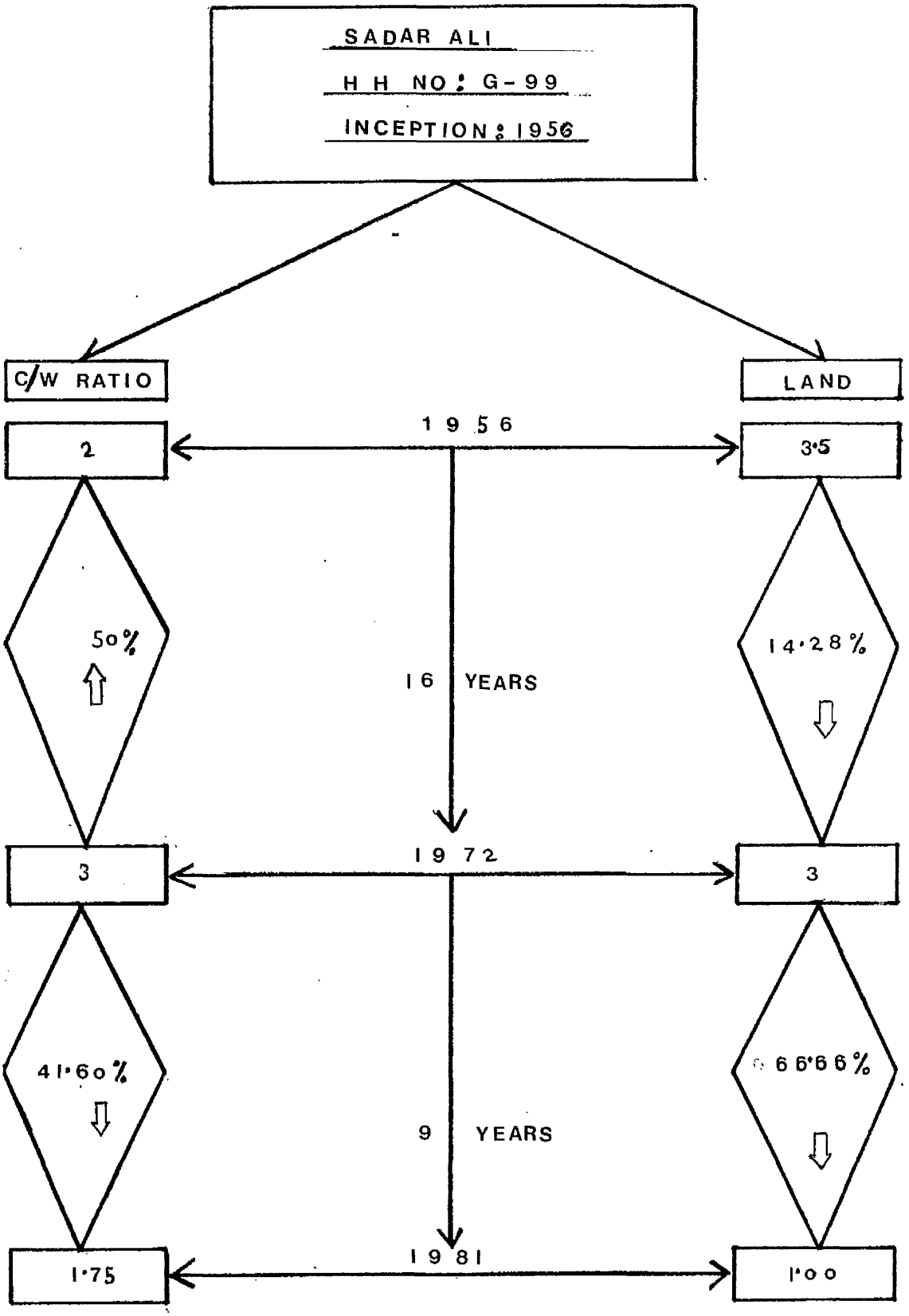
Case III

In village 2 we witnessed a similar story. Bhaben Mali inherited 3 acres of land when he first became household head in 1965. But as he had children, he lost most of his land to face the consumption and other economic pressure. So by 1981, although his c/w ratio has increased to 3.5, his land ownership has fallen to 1.33 acres.

The major findings of these case studies are presented in the following diagrams.

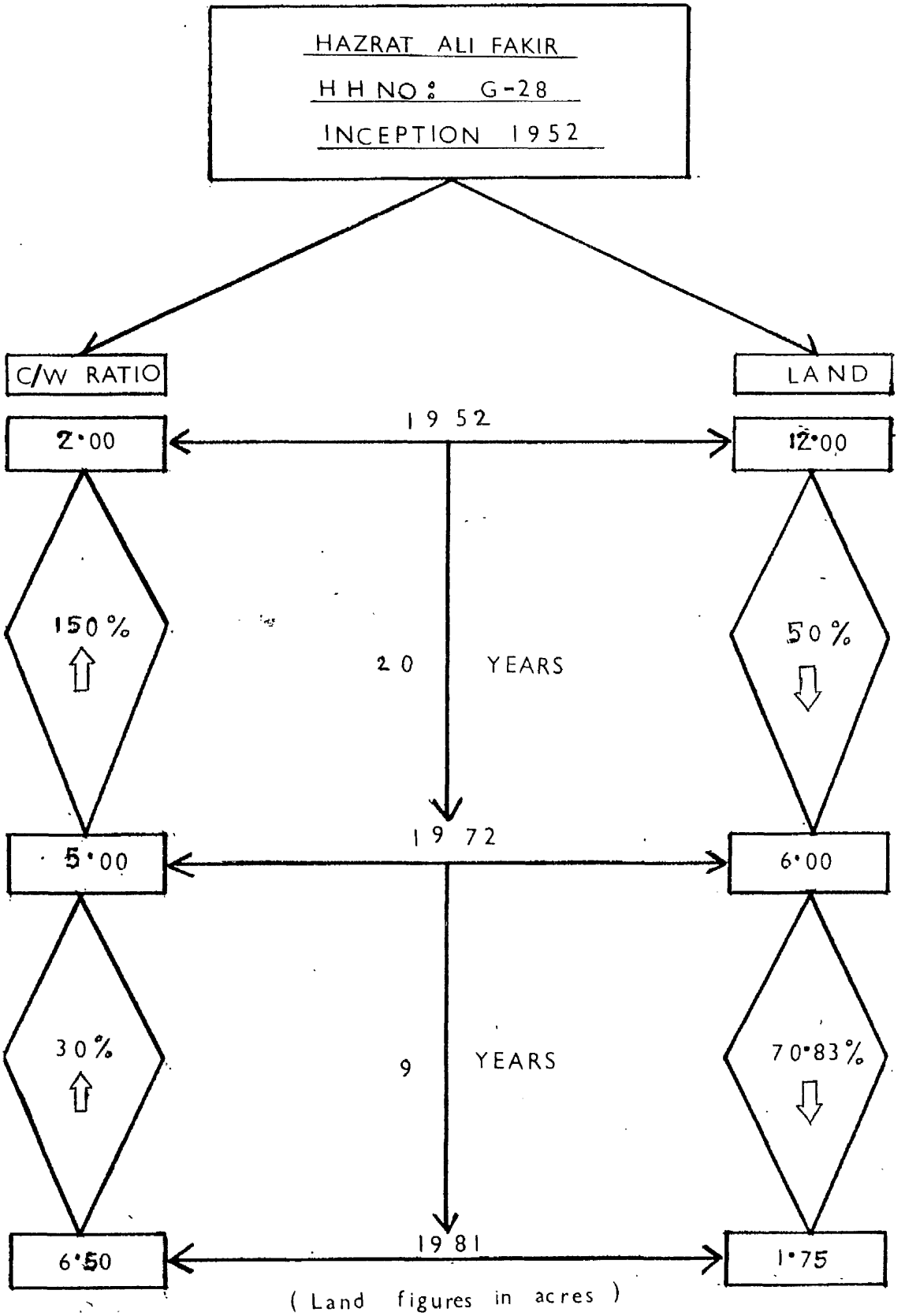
Hence from the above discussions based on our fieldwork, we can safely conclude that except for one or two sporadic cases, the Chayanovian hypotheses of demographic differentiation do not really correspond to the realities of rural Bangladesh. We have examined the hypothesis with both static and dynamic data, and nowhere have we found a broad indication of the Chayanovian scenerio of demographic differentiation determined by purely biological factors rather than socio-economic realities. We have examined in detail the correlation exercises between the c/w ratio and land size, agricultural output, agricultural income, age of the family over time, and we have not observed a trend consistent with the criteria of a Chayanovian peasantry.

CASE : I



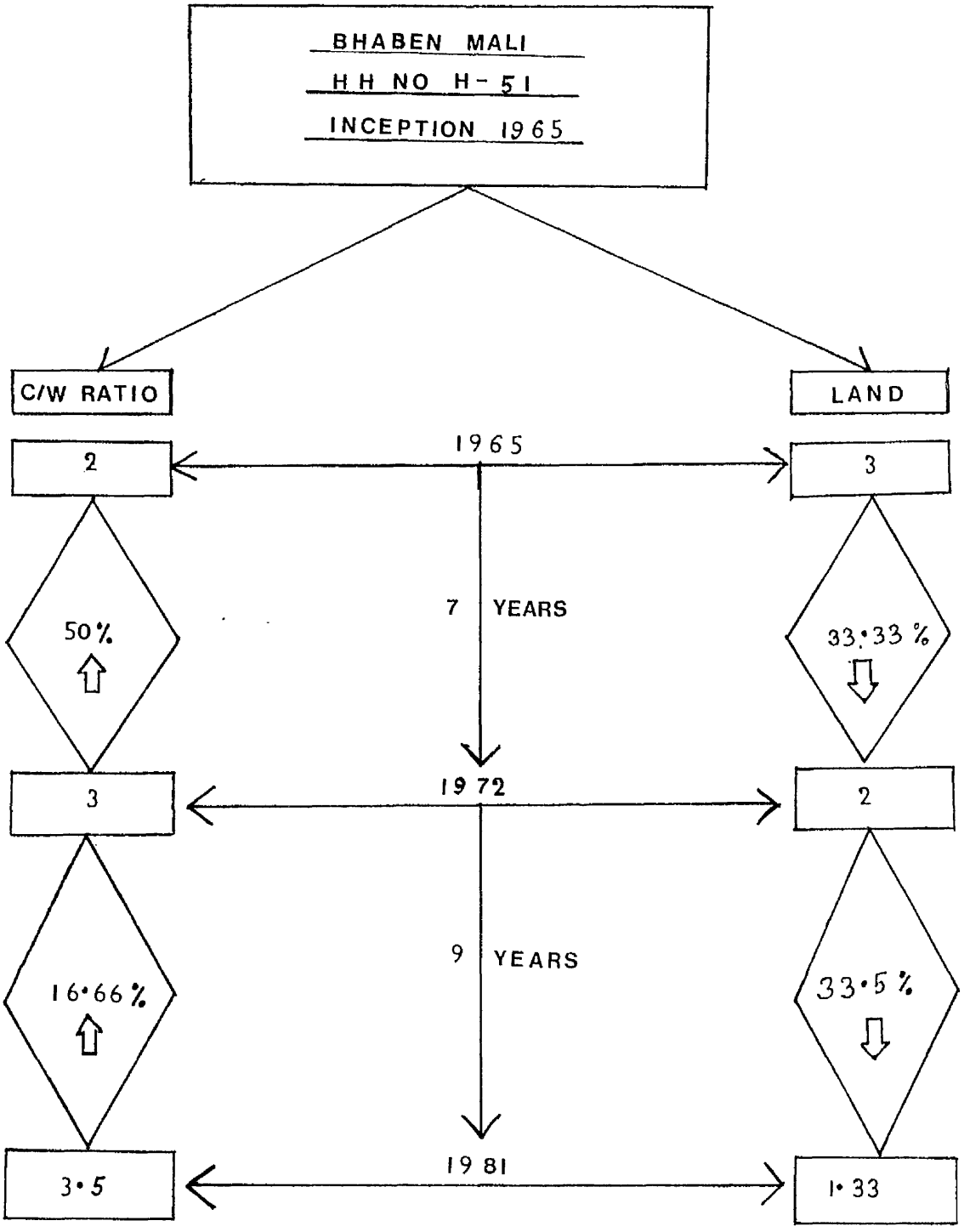
(Land figures in acres)

CASE : 2



(Land figures in acres)

CASE : 3



(Land figures are in acres)

HYPOTHESIS 10:

This Chayanovian hypothesis has been formulated by Shanin in terms of his mobility schema. His ideas on family life cycle in a way reemphasise Chayanov's demographic differentiation. According to this hypothesis no peasant household, however rich, can remain rich for a long time and exhibits its class entity as demographic pressures shall pull it down to a poorer position.

To test this mobility hypothesis of Shanin, we have constructed a mobility matrix for each of our study villages, based on the time series data on owned land distribution. Since we have land information for 1951, 1972 and 1981, we could construct a number of mobility matrices using different terminal years.

Let us first look at the mobility matrix for each of our study villages using 1951 and 1981 as the two terminal years. Table 5.19 shows us the mobility of households from one group to the other between 1951 and 1981 in village-1. Table 5.20 shows the same for village 2.

As can be seen from the tables, we have taken slightly different land group sizes while categorizing rural households in terms of their economic position. Notes below each table clarify the idea.

TABLE 5.19

LAND MOBILITY MATRIX FOR VILLAGE - 1: 1951-1981

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1951)	HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1981)				TOTAL
	LLHH	PHH	MHH	RHH	
LLHH	75.8 (27.0)	17.2 (7.1)	6.8 (7.7)	- (-)	100.0
PHH	61.2 (36.5)	26.5 (18.6)	8.2 (15.4)	4.1 (9.0)	100.0
MHH	26.6 (19.5)	45.0 (38.7)	18.4 (42.3)	10.0 (27.4)	100.0
RHH	22.5 (17.0)	40.4 (35.6)	14.5 (34.6)	22.6 (63.6)	100.0
TOTAL	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	

Notes: All figures incidate percentages. The figures in parenthesis are the elements of a column matrix indicating percentage distribution of land for 1981. Figures in squares are the elements of a row matrix indicating percentage distribution of land for 1951.

Landless Households (LLHH) own 0 - .50 acres of land in village-1
Poor Households (PHH) own .51-2.50 acres of land in village-1
Middle Households (MHH) own 2.51-5.00 acres of land in village-1
Rich Households (RHH) own 5.01 + acres of land in village-1

TABLE 5.20

LAND MOBILITY MATRIX FOR VILLAGE - 2: 1951-1981

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1951)	HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1981)				TOTAL
	LLHH	PHH	MHH	RHH	
LLHH	66.7 (20.0)	33.3 (6.2)	- (-)	- (-)	100.0
PHH	50.0 (46.7)	46.5 (27.0)	3.5 (6.6)	- (-)	100.0
MHH	12.0 (10.0)	60.0 (31.2)	24.0 (40.0)	4.0 (12.5)	100.0
RHH	18.0 (23.3)	43.5 (35.6)	20.5 (53.4)	18.0 (87.5)	100.0
TOTAL	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	

Notes: All figures indicate percentages. The figures in parentheses are the elements of a column matrix indicating percentage distribution of land for 1981. Figures in squares are the elembents of a row matrix indicating percentage distribution of land for 1951.

Landless House holds (LLHH) own 0 - .50 acres of land in village-2
Poor Households (PHH) own .51 - 3.50 acres of land in village-2
Middle Households (MHH) own 3.51 - 7.50 acres of land in village-2
Rich Households (RHH) own 7.51 + acres of land in village-2

Table 5.19 tells us the following:

(i) Of all the LLHHs of 1951, 75.8% have remained in the same group even in 1981. The rest climbed up the ladder to settle in higher groups.

(ii) Of all the PHHs of 1951, 26.5% have remained in the same group in 1981, 61.2% went down to the LLHH group and the rest went up to the upper groups.

(iii) Of all the MHHs of 1951, only 18.4% have remained in the same group in 1981. 10% climbed up to the richer groups and the rest fell down the ladder.

(iv) Of all the RHHs 22.6% have remained in the same group in 1981. The others fell down the ladder.

Excepting the LHH group, Shanin is apparently correct in hypothesising a fluid situation in rural Bangladesh.

But if we present the data from the column matrix, we get a significantly different picture. Thus reading from the column matrix, we observe that:

(i) The RHHs show a considerable ability to stay in their original position. Thus of all the RHHs of 1981, 63.6% had a similar landownership background even in 1951. Only about 36.4% came from lower groups.

(ii) Of all the MHHs, 42.3% came from the same group.

(iii) The majority of the poor and landless households came from the rich and middle groups of the peasantry. About 17% of LLHHs of 1981 came from RHHs in 1951.

We also get a similar trend in village-2. Thus table 5.20 reveals that:

(i) Of all the LLHHs of 1951, 66.7% have remained in the same group in 1981.

(ii) Of all the PHHs of 1951, 46.5% have remained PHH even in 1981. 50.0% have fallen down and the rest went up the ladder.

(iii) Of all the MHHs of 1951, only about 24.0% have remained in the same group in 1981. The rest of them have disintegrated. Only 4% went up. The remaining 72% became impoverished.

(iv) Of all the RHHS of 1951, 18.0% have remained in the same group and the rest fell down the ladder.

But if we turn to the column matrix we get a different picture. It reveals that:

(i) Of all the RHHs of 1981, 87.5% had a similar landownership background in 1951. Only about 12.5% of today's rich households came from MHH group.

(ii) Of all the MHHs of 1981, 40% came from the same group of 1951. Only 6.6% of today's MHH came from poor households of 1951. The rest came from RHH groups.

(iii) Of all the PHHs of 1981, 27% came from the same category of peasantry of 1951. 6.2% of todays PHH came from LLHH category. The rest came from the richer groups.

(iv) Of the LLHHs of 1981, 20% came from the same group of 1951.

Thus if we combine the findings from row and column matrix, we can safely conclude that although a good proportion of the richer households have become poorer over the span of three decades (1951-1981), the majority of today's RHHs came from a richer background in both the villages. Similarly almost two-third of the LLHHs of 1951 have remained

TABLE 5.21

LAND MOBILITY MATRIX FOR VILLAGE - 1: 1951-1972

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1951)	HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES 1972				TOTAL
	LLHH	PHH	MHH	RHH	
LLHH	88.5% (39.7%)	11.5% (4.3%)	- (-)	- (-)	100.0
PHH	40.0% (34.5%)	44.0% (31.4%)	12.0% (12.3%)	4.0% (8.7%)	100.0
MHH	18.3% (19.0%)	35.0% (30.0%)	40.0% (48.9%)	6.7% (17.4%)	100.0
RHH	6.3% (6.8%)	37.5% (34.3%)	29.7% (38.8%)	26.5% (73.9%)	100.0
TOTAL	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	

NOTES: As in table 5.19

TABLE 5.22

LAND MOBILITY MATRIX FOR VILLAGE - 1: 1972-1981

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1972)	HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES 1981				TOTAL
	LLHH	PHH	MHH	RHH	
LLHH	83.1 (60.4%)	16.9 (14.3%)	- (-)	- (-)	100.0
PHH	32.4 (27.2%)	52.9 (51.4%)	13.2 (34.7%)	1.5 (4.4%)	100.0
MHH	16.3 (9.9%)	42.8 (30.0%)	30.6 (57.6%)	10.3 (21.7%)	100.0
RHH	8.3 (2.5%)	12.5 (4.3%)	8.4 (7.7%)	70.8 (73.9%)	100.0
TOTAL	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	

NOTES: As in table 5.19

TABLE 5.23

LAND MOBILITY MATRIX FOR VILLAGE - 2: 1951-1972

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1951)	HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES 1972				TOTAL
	LLHH	PHH	MHH	RHH	
LLHH	77.8 (43.8%)	22.2 (3.7%)	- (-)	- (-)	100.0
PHH	25.0 (43.8%)	71.4 (37.0%)	3.6 (5.0%)	- (-)	100.0
MHH	- (-)	56.0 (25.9%)	40.0 (50.0%)	4.0 (9.1%)	100.0
RHH	5.1 (12.4%)	46.2 (33.4%)	23.1 (45.0%)	25.6 (90.9%)	100.0
TOTAL	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	

NOTES: As in table 5.20

TABLE 5.24

LAND MOBILITY MATRIX FOR VILLAGE - 2: 1972-1981

HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES (1972)	HOUSEHOLD CATEGORIES 1981				TOTAL
	LLHH	PHH	MHH	RHH	
LLHH	68.7 (36.8%)	31.3 (10.6%)	- (-)	- (-)	100.0
PHH	27.8 (50.0%)	66.7 (76.7%)	5.5 (18.7%)	- (-)	100.0
MHH	15.0 (10.0%)	25.0 (10.6%)	60.0 (75.0%)	- (-)	100.0
RHH	9.1 (3.3%)	9.1 (2.1%)	9.1 (6.3%)	72.2 (100.0%)	100.0
TOTAL	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	

Notes: As in table 5.20

landless to this day. This means that for the two extreme groups the staying power is quite high and the intervening period is long enough to allow them to consolidate as stable groups with similar economic and other interests. As for the middle groups, we notice a perpetual disintegration. Thus in both villages we find the middle group in mobility in either direction. But the proportion of dispossession is much greater than that of enhancement. We have also constructed other mobility matrices for both the villages for the years 1951 and 1972 and also 1972 and 1981.

Mobility matrices shown in tables 5.21-5.24 also confirm that the majority of the RHHs and LLHHs have shown extreme ability to stay in their own groups for a long period. In one case, as shown in table 6.23, 100% of today's rich households came from RHHs of 1951.

Thus examining the mobility matrices which we have constructed, we cannot say that Shanin's anti-class formation hypothesis is supported by the empirical information we have on the Bangladesh peasantry. Our participant observation also lends support to this conclusion.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS:

Our fieldwork findings do not support the Chayanovian view of demographic differentiation. The Chayanovian economy requires complete absence of wage labour.

(i) We noted as high as 40% of households in village-1 and 29% in village-2 earning a agricultural wage.

(ii) Only 15% of households in village-1 and 20% in village-2 can be termed as pure 'cultivators', depending primarily on their own labour.

(iii) More than 90% of households in both villages employed casual labour. The incidence of employing hired labour has been increasing amongst rich households.

(iv) We found most peasant households highly profit conscious and cost minimisers. They make rational production decisions in the face of changing product prices.

(v) Flexible land supply is a myth in Bangladesh. Operated land size has been constantly shrinking as rich peasants have taken back some of the rented out land from the tenants. The acute per capita operated land figures amongst poor and middle peasants negate the Chayanovian notion of speedy land adjustments through the rental system.

(vi) We did not get any consistent correlation between family size and landholding size as expected by the Chayanovian view.

(vii) Nor did we get any consistent correlation between the consumer-worker ratio and output/agricultural income.

(viii) Intensity of worker was not always noted to vary with family size. In most cases hours put by a family labour varied with the landholding sizes.

(ix) We also noted that an increase in the number of consumers alone does not lead to higher output per acre or per worker. In other words, the direction of casuality is not from family size to land size but indeed vice-versa.

(x) Our field data also do not support the life cycle hypothesis of Chayanov, which assumes that the c/w ratio increases first and then starts falling as some of the children join the work force.

(xi) The modern version of Chayanovian ideas in terms of a 'homogeneous peasantry', as formulated by Shanin in the shape of his mobility schema, was also not found to work in our study villages. We did not note a fluid peasantry. In fact, most of the present day rich households had a rich background.

FIELDWORK FINDINGS : PART - B

THE LENINIST CLASS DIFFERENTIATION

As hypothesised in Chapter 3, the Leninist school of thought on the differentiation of the peasantry approaches the issue from two main angles. These are (i) what has been happening with respect to possession of the means of production and other related characteristics; and (ii) what has been happening with respect to the labour processes.

We plan to proceed in four steps to test the Leninist hypothesis on differentiation in the case of the Bangladesh peasantry, using micro level data collected from our study villages:

(a) In Chapter VI we will examine the extent of differences in the distribution of land. The focus of the analysis will be on the changing patterns of concentration of land over time plus the pattern of dispossession. The analysis will cover, in most cases, a period of thirty years (1951-81).

(b) Chapter VII will include an examination of (i) ownership patterns of all other elements of production (except land) eg. , draught and other animals, farm implements and accessories. Whenever possible, information on quantitative differences in the ownership of these elements will be complemented with qualitative findings: for example, the health and value of the draught animals, the length of the iron share used in the wooden ploughs etc.

(ii) The farming techniques, cropping intensities, use of modern inputs, level of agricultural production and pattern of income distribution, which immediately follow from the above differential possession.

iii) Differences in the standard of living amongst different groups of the peasantry. Items included are : housing, other household assets, level and pattern of expenditure, the extent and nature of food in take etc.

c) In chapter VIII we will make an attempt to explain these differences, focussing primarily upon the changing patterns of production relations involving men from different strata of the peasantry.

d) In chapter IX we will consider the hypotheses related to the nature of the labour processes and especially the extent of labour exploitations as an explanatory variable with respect to differentiation.

In addition to these well-known Leninist hypothesis, we will also examine the state as an important complementary variable to explain differences in the material elements of production in Chapter X. Starting with a short review of the theoretical works on the state, particularly those focussing on contemporary third world states, we proceed to a discussion of the differential impacts of the development strategy pursued by the Bangladesh state over the last decade, especially since its birth in 1971. Here we will single out a few important governmental policies which normally have been observed to have a direct bearing on the peasantry. We will examine the extent of involvement of the respondents from our study villages with these policies and the nature of the benefits that have accured to different groups of the peasantry depending on their positions in the overall power matrix. We will simultaneously complement our discussion on the state and peasantry with a number of relevant case studies.

CHAPTER VI

CONCENTRATION OF LANDOWNERSHIP/CONTROL

We have collected micro level information on various categories of land (i.e. owned, operated and effectively controlled) with respect to nine groups of the peasantry in the two villages we studied. The groups are empirical categories and may be pooled into a small number of groups or classes if required. The data relates to three different time periods: the early 1950s, the early 1970s and the early 1980s. We will present the information chronologically i.e. for the 1950s, the 1970s and the 1980s. We have already noted the general trends in Chapter IV while presenting an overview of the agrarian structure. Here in this chapter we will see if our micro findings conform to those macro generalisations.

1. THE CHANGING LANDHOLDING PATTERN: 1951-81

In the early 1950s, everything was inaflux in the then East Pakistan (today's Bangladesh). Following Partition in 1947 and the creation of Pakistan, there was a great deal of emigration of rich Hindu families (most of them being former Zamindars, Talukdars and Jotedars) out of our study areas to India. Also a few Muslim families from Assam and other eastern districts of India migrated into those villages. Around that time there were frequent communal riots, land grabbing by rich raiyats and transfer of many assets. Shortly after Partition came the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act of 1950 (henceforth EBSATA) in the light of the recommendations of the Floud Commission (Floud, 1940).

Village 1 was not affected significantly in terms of the distribution of ownership rights of land by this Act. There were no resident Zamindars or their agents in this village. The raiyats just became maliks - a change of status which did not alter in effect the distribution of landholdings. In a few cases, the rich Muslim raiyats

gained some land from their Hindu counterparts who decided to leave the village to settle in India. The price paid for this land was, indeed, very nominal, as always is the case with this type of distress sale.

But drastic changes were observed in village 2. Ther were two small Zamindars in this village enjoying titles to at least three hundred acres of land (not necessarily within the boundary of village 2) in the Pre-EBSATA period. They lost their control over the Zamindari lands and became ordinary landowners. Their raiyats, who actually cultivated the lands earlier, became the maliks (i.e. land owners).

Significant changes were noted in the landholding pattern in both villages in the 1960s and 1970. The general trends which we observed in Chapter IV at the macro level, could also be confirmed by our micro investigations. The concentration of land in the hands of a few was seen to have increased over time in both villages, though the magnitude of that concentration varied from village to village.

The mid 1960s saw the beginning of 'Green Revolution' in rural Bangladesh. But none of our study villages seems to have been affected by that early dose of'Green Revolution'.

The war of liberation in the early 1970s brought many changes in rural Bangladesh. The new government announced a new land reform bill. More modern agricultural inputs such as pumps, fertilizer, insecticides, seeds etc. were made available to the cultivators. Village 1 seems to have benefited more from the later dose of 'green revolution' and consequently has undergone the tremendous stress and strain of income inequalities that usually follow such an inflow of modern inputs (Byres, 1972; 1981; Griffin, 1974: 51-59). Village 2 witnessed very little of this inflow. Simultaneously, population has increased quite fast in both villages during the last thirty years and the impact of this demographic explosion can be seen in the declining per capita share of land.

We draw these conclusions from the data we collected during our field works. Tables 6.1a and 6.1b give us an average picture of changing pattern of land-man relations over the period 1951-1981.

TABLE 6.1A

VILLAGE - 1: THE GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, POPULATION AND THE SIZE OF LAND OWNERSHIP: 1951-81

Items	1951	1972	1981	% change (1951-1972)	Annual % change (1951-1972)	% change (1972-1981)	Annual % change (1972-1981)
1. No. of HH	138	173	200	+25.36	+1.20	+15.60	+1.73
2. Population	566	873	1183	+54.24	+2.85	+35.51	+3.94
3. Average household size (members per HH)	4.10	5.04	5.91	+22.92	+1.09	+17.26	+1.91
4. Average land owned per household (in acres)	4.12	2.66	2.18	-35.43	-1.68	-18.04	-2.00
5. Average land owned per capita (in acres)	1.00	.52	.37	-48.00	-2.28	-40.54	-4.50

Note: HH = Households

TABLE 6.1B

VILLAGE 2: THE GROWTH IN THE NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS, POPULATION AND THE SIZE OF LAND OWNERSHIP: 1951-81

ITEMS	1951	1972	1981	% change (1951-1972)	Annual % change (1951-1972)	% change (1972-1981)	Annual % change (1972-1981)
1. No of HH	51	81	121	+58.82	+2.80	+49.38	+5.48
2. Population	220	379	656	+72.27	+3.44	+73.08	+8.12
3. Average household size (members per HH)	4.31*	4.68	5.42	+ 8.58	+ .41	+15.81	+1.75
4. Average land owned per household (in acres)	5.89	3.78	2.76	-35.82	-1.70	-26.98	-2.99
5. Average land owned per capita (in acres)	1.36	.81	.51	-40.44	-1.92	-37.03	-4.11

Note: HH = Household

* Mukherjee found the average land owned per household for the interior villages (village - 2 was one of them) as 6.1 acres in 1942.

We notice from tables 6.1A and 6.1B a steady increase in the number of households and population in both villages with a simultaneous decline in average land owned per household and per capita.

(i) There were 138 households in village 1 in 1951. This increased to 173 in 1972 and to 200 in 1981. That means the percentage change in the increase of households between 1951-1972 was +25.36 (the annual change being +1.20%). The change between 1972-1981 was +15.60% (the annual change being +1.73).

Similarly in village 2, the annual change in the number of households between 1951-1972 was +2.80% and that between 1972-81 was +5.48%. This means that the speed of disintegration of the household was much greater in the 1970s than that of the 1950s and 1960s.

(ii) Population increased even faster in both villages. The rate of growth of population was higher in the seventies than the previous period. The growth was more dramatic in village 2 (+8.12% annually). Following the war of liberation in 1971 and the consequent vast dislocation in the socio-economic structures, there was a net immigration of 21 families into village 2 from the district of Faridpur. They were landless destitutes and as such we get an 'immiserised' picture of land-man ratios in village 2 in the early 1980s.

(iii) The decline in per household and per capita land owned was worse in the 1970s than the previous period in both villages. The per household land owned declined to almost half between 1951-81. Whereas the annual declined between 1951-72 for village 1 was (-)1.68% that between 1972-81 was (-)2.00%. The corresponding rates for village 2 were (-)1.70% and (-)2.99% respectively.

(iv) The decline in the per capita figures was even more drastic. Though the period between 1972-81 was almost half of that between 1951-72, the % of decline in per capita landownership size in the 1970s was almost equal to the % decline in the 1950s and the 1960s together in both the villages. Whereas as the annual growth of decline in

per capita figure for village 1 between 1951-1972 was (-)2.28%, that between 1972-81 was (-)4.50%. The corresponding figures for village 2 were (-)1.92% and (-)4.11%.

Thus we can see an average picture which has been deteriorating secularly. However, this average picture can be quite misleading. Not all households lost their economic strength. In fact, a section of them gained more economic strength by acquiring more land through buying,mortagaging and renting in more operated land. When we distribute the households into 9 empirical categories we find a highly differential picture.

Tables 6.2A and 6.2B gives us that heterogeneous picture.

TABLE 6.2A

VILLAGE I: LAND MAN RELATIONS BY LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1951-1981

LAND OWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS			POPULATION			TOTAL LAND OWNED (ACRES)			LAND OWNED PER HOUSEHOLD (ACRES)			LAND OWNED PER CAPITA (ACRES)		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	4 (2.90)	8 (4.62)	12 (6.00)	27 (4.77)	34 (3.89)	50 (4.23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	15 (10.86)	45 (26.01)	70 (35.00)	55 (9.72)	196 (22.45)	301 (25.44)	2.20 (.38)	12.49 (2.71)	13.39 (3.06)	.14	.27	.19	.04	.06	.04
3.	14 (10.14)	26 (15.03)	37 (18.50)	37 (6.53)	119 (13.63)	202 (17.07)	12.08 (2.12)	27.24 (5.92)	37.52 (8.59)	.86	1.04	1.01	.32	.22	.18
4.	26 (18.84)	37 (21.39)	33 (16.50)	86 (15.19)	190 (21.76)	201 (16.99)	49.93 (8.77)	75.44 (16.38)	67.00 (15.33)	1.92	2.03	2.03	.58	.39	.33
5.	16 (11.59)	18 (10.40)	12 (3.00)	61 (10.78)	100 (11.45)	98 (8.28)	45.16 (7.94)	54.33 (11.84)	35.42 (8.11)	2.82	3.03	2.95	.74	.54	.36
6.	27 (19.57)	18 (10.40)	14 (7.00)	117 (20.67)	98 (11.22)	108 (9.13)	113.87 (20.00)	76.24 (16.56)	62.97 (14.41)	4.22	4.23	4.49	.97	.77	.58
7.	13 (9.42)	7 (4.05)	7 (3.50)	60 (10.60)	35 (4.01)	72 (6.09)	75.02 (13.18)	46.22 (10.04)	44.96 (10.29)	5.77	6.60	6.42	1.25	1.32	.62
8.	10 (7.25)	7 (4.05)	9 (4.50)	55 (9.72)	44 (5.04)	93 (7.86)	81.82 (14.38)	60.70 (13.18)	81.00 (18.54)	8.18	8.67	9.00	1.48	1.38	.87
9.	13 (9.42)	7 (4.05)	6 (3.00)	68 (12.01)	57 (6.54)	58 (4.90)	189.00 (33.21)	107.50 (23.35)	94.66 (21.66)	14.54	15.35	15.77	2.77	1.88	1.63
ALL GROUPS	138 (99.99)	173 (100.00)	200 (100.00)	566 (99.99)	873 (99.99)	1183 (99.99)	569.08 (99.99)	460.36 (99.98)	436.93 (99.99)	4.12	2.66	2.18	1.00	.52	.37

NOTE: Figures in the parentheses shown percentages. Percentage figures do not always add up to 100.00 because of rounding off figures

TABLE 6.2B

VILLAGE 2: LAND-MAN RELATIONS BY LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1951-1981

LAND OWNERSHIP GROUPS	NO. OF HOUSEHOLDS			POPULATION			TOTAL LAND OWNED (ACRES)			LAND OWNED PER HOUSEHOLD (ACRES)			LAND OWNED PER CAPITA (ACRES)		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	3 (5.88)	11 (13.58)	29 (23.97)	7 (3.18)	39 (10.29)	118 (17.99)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	3 (5.88)	3 (3.70)	21 (17.35)	10 (4.54)	12 (3.17)	95 (14.48)	1.12 (.37)	1.05 (.34)	6.39 (1.90)	.37	.35	.30	.11	.08	.06
3.	8 (15.69)	13 (16.05)	15 (12.40)	30 (13.62)	53 (13.98)	85 (12.96)	8.24 (2.74)	11.03 (3.60)	16.73 (5.00)	1.03	.84	1.11	.27	.20	.19
4.	3 (5.88)	17 (20.99)	18 (14.87)	12 (5.45)	65 (17.15)	92 (14.02)	6.13 (2.04)	34.68 (11.31)	36.03 (10.76)	2.04	2.04	2.00	.51	.53	.39
5.	5 (9.80)	11 (13.58)	14 (11.57)	18 (8.18)	45 (11.87)	75 (11.43)	14.78 (4.91)	33.08 (10.78)	42.85 (12.80)	2.95	3.00	3.06	.82	.73	.57
6.	7 (13.72)	10 (12.35)	9 (7.44)	24 (10.91)	51 (13.45)	55 (8.38)	32.21 (10.71)	44.88 (14.63)	36.60 (10.94)	4.60	4.48	4.06	1.34	.88	.66
7.	7 (13.72)	8 (9.87)	7 (5.78)	28 (12.73)	46 (12.14)	49 (7.47)	42.33 (14.04)	52.09 (16.98)	43.62 (13.03)	6.04	6.51	6.23	1.51	1.13	.89
8.	6 (11.76)	2 (2.47)	2 (1.65)	25 (11.36)	13 (3.43)	16 (2.44)	51.89 (17.25)	16.57 (5.40)	17.66 (5.27)	2.65	8.28	8.83	2.07	1.27	1.10
9.	9 (17.65)	6 (7.40)	6 (4.96)	66 (30.00)	55 (14.51)	71 (10.82)	144.15 (47.92)	113.31 (36.95)	134.80 (40.28)	16.01	18.88	22.46	2.18	2.06	1.89
All groups	51 (99.98)	81 (99.99)	121 (99.99)	220 (99.97)	379 (99.99)	656 (99.99)	300.85 (99.98)	306.69 (99.99)	334.68 (99.98)	5.89	3.78	2.76	1.36	.81	.51

Note: Figures in the brackets show percentages. Percentage figures do not always add up to 100.00 because of rounding off error.

Tables 6.2A and 6.2B show a wide range of changes that have been proceeding in both villages since the early 1950s.

The proportion of households in the landless and the land-poor groups swelled whereas that in the land-rich groups in fact ebbed over the last three decades:

(i) The proportion of households owning less than .50 acres of land (including the landless ones) increased sharply from about 14% in 1951 to about 31% in 1972 and finally to 41% in 1981. The corresponding figures for village 2 are 12%, 16% and 41%.[1]

(ii) The burden of supporting additional mouths by the marginal households also increased steadily during this time. Thus the above two groups together constituted about 14% of the population of village 1 in 1951. The proportion increased to 26% in 1972 and to 30% in 1981. The corresponding population figures for village 2 are 7%, 13% and 32%.

(iii) But the total land owned by this poorest section of the peasantry did not increase at the same pace. In village 1 they owned 0.38% of the total land in 1951. This increased to 2.37% in 1972 and 3.06% in 1981. The corresponding figures for village 2 are 0.37%, .34% and 1.90%. And most of this land was in fact homestead land. The decline in their economic position becomes clearer when we consider the per household and per capita figures. The per capita figure declined more drastically than the per household figure. The extent of this decline was greater in the period 1972-81 than in 1951-72. It is true that the per capita figures declined for almost all groups, but the magnitude of the dispossession was certainly much higher in the landpoor groups. This is true for both the villages.

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1. The figure for 1981 looks vastly exaggerated because of the families who migrated into village 2 in the early 1970s.

(iv) By contrast, we notice a significant decline in the proportion of households but not in the proportion of land owned. In fact, there is a sharp increase in their share in the seventies. Thus, we see that groups 8 and 9 together constituted about 16% of households of village 1 and owned about 47% of land in 1951. By 1972, though the proportion of households in these two groups declined by half their share of land declined by only 11%. By 1981, they constituted only 7.50% of total households and owned more than 40% of total land. Similarly in village 2, groups 8 and 9 together comprised about 29% of households in 1951. This proportion declined drastically to about 10% in 1972 and to about 7% in 1981. Although their proportion of total households shrank, their share of owned land did not decrease proportionately. These two groups together owned about 65% of land in 1951.[2] Their share dropped to 42% in 1972 and again increased to 45% in 1981.

The per household figures increased in both the villages. However, there has been some decline in the per capita land due to overall increase in the population. But on the whole we notice positive indices of economic strength in these land-rich groups.

(v) In the middle groups, say groups 5, 6 and 7, there has been significant decline in the proportion of households and also the share of the land. These are the households which have been under tremendous pressure to disintegrate and in most cases the disintegrated households fell down the scale.

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2. In a way the distribution of land was less skewed in the early 1950s than in the 1940s. Mukherjee noted that 14% of households in the interior village owned less than one acres, 45% between 1 and 5 acres, 20% between 5 and 10 acres and 21% owned more than 10 acres in 1942 (Mukherjee 1957a: 84). It may be mentioned that according to our findings the proportion of households owning more than 10 acres of land was 17.65%.

It is claimed by some scholars that although there exists considerable inequality in the distribution of owned land, land is generally cultivated in small and medium size family based holdings (see for example, Hossain, M, 1981: 24). They argue that the majority of small landowners rent in land from others to cultivate a larger size of holding than their ownership of cultivable land would permit. Similarly, many large landowners are said to rent out a part of their holdings to others and cultivate a holding smaller in size than the actual size of their ownership. Also, there are many landowners, especially the poorer ones, who rent out their entire holding and engage in non-farming activities. Because of this pattern of land transfer through the rental market, Hossain argues that the distribution of operated land is much less unequal than the distribution of owned land (Hossain 1981: 24).

But our data do not entirely support the above suggestion. In fact, even after the effective adjustments of rental shares, the distribution of land remains highly unequal in both villages. To test this hypothesis, we have taken nine land owning groups as the basic reference groups and then distributed various types of land (owned cultivated, operated and effective) among these groups. We first examine the command over these different categories of land by each of those nine groups in village 1. Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 give the details.

TABLE 6.3

VILLAGE 1: COMMAND OVER OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND BY LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1951-1981

Group Number	Basic Land ownership groups (acres)	% of total owned cultivable land			Owned cultivable per HH (acres)			Owned cultivable per capita (acre)		
		1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	.01- .50	.16	2.37	1.82	.05	.22	.10	.01	.05	.02
3.	.51-1.50	1.94	5.97	7.78	.69	.97	.84	.26	.21	.15
4.	1.51-2.50	8.90	16.31	15.16	1.72	1.87	1.84	.52	.36	.30
5.	2.51-3.50	8.18	11.68	8.08	2.57	2.75	2.69	.67	.49	.33
6.	3.51-5.00	20.58	17.35	14.36	3.84	4.07	4.10	.88	.75	.53
7.	5.01-7.50	13.82	10.16	10.48	5.36	6.15	5.99	1.16	1.23	.58
8.	7.51-10.00	14.08	13.39	19.35	7.10	8.11	8.60	1.29	1.29	.83
9.	10.01 and above	32.32	22.75	22.95	12.53	13.78	15.30	2.39	1.69	1.58
	All groups	99.98	99.98	99.98	3.65	2.45	2.00	.89	.48	.34

Note: HH = Households
percentage figures do not always add up to 100.00% because of rounding off error.

TABLE 6.4

VILLAGE 1: COMMAND OVER OPERATED LAND BY LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1951-1981

LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS	% of Operated Land			Operated Land/HH			Operated Land/Capita		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	0	.40	1.85	0	.22	.64	0	.05	.15
2.	1.68	4.13	3.77	.51	.40	.22	.13	.09	.05
3.	2.90	9.20	9.08	.95	1.56	1.03	.36	.34	.19
4.	11.93	17.97	15.11	2.11	2.15	1.92	.63	.42	.31
5.	9.19	13.65	7.35	2.66	3.36	2.57	.69	.60	.31
6.	21.84	16.53	14.37	3.72	4.06	4.30	.85	.74	.55
7.	13.11	9.23	10.24	4.63	5.84	6.14	1.00	1.16	.59
8.	12.39	11.35	16.79	5.70	7.18	7.82	1.03	1.14	.75
9.	26.96	17.53	21.42	9.53	11.10	14.97	1.82	1.36	1.55
All Groups	100.00	99.99	99.98	3.33	2.56	2.09	.81	.51	.35

TABLE 6.5

VILLAGE 1: COMMAND OVER EFFECTIVE LAND BY BASIC LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1951-1972

LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS	% of Effective land			Effective land/HH			Effective land/Capita		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	0	.20	.95	0	.11	.32	0	.02	.08
2.	.87	3.53	2.89	.28	.34	.16	.07	.07	.03
3.	2.27	7.82	8.87	.78	1.31	.98	.29	.28	.18
4.	10.68	17.11	15,00	2.01	2.02	1.86	.60	.39	.30
5.	8.71	12.56	7.18	2.67	3.05	2.45	.70	.55	.30
6.	20.80	16.43	14.48	3.78	3.99	4.23	.87	1.73	.54
7.	13.60	10.01	10.29	5.13	6.27	6.02	1.11	1.25	.58
8.	13.29	12.28	18.04	6.52	7.68	8.21	1.18	1.22	.79
9.	29.78	20.03	22.28	11.25	12.52	15.20	2.15	1.53	1.57
All groups	100.00	99.98	99.98	3.55	2.53	2.04	.86	.50	.34

(1) Table 6.3 is almost similar to table 6.2A, only the extent of inequality is slightly greater. The share of the poorer groups (say the first 2 groups) in table 6.3 is much less than that shown in table 6.2A. This may be because of the homestead land, which we excluded while computing owned cultivable land. The situation has worsened for the poorer groups in the last decade. As for the richer groups (say groups 8 and 9) there was an initial decline in over all share in the period between 1951-72 (of course, the number of households also declined in these groups) and the share has increased in the 1970s.

(2) As shown in Table 6.4, the situation is quite different when we consider command over operated land. No doubt the distribution is less skewed than that shown in table 6.3, but the inequality is still high enough to cause concern. What is more disturbing is that the proportion of operated land has been swelling in the richer groups and falling in the poorer groups. The same thing is true for per capita figures. Thus except in group 1 (where the percentage of operated land has, in fact, increased over time), most of the other poorer groups (say groups 2 and 3 and 4) lost some of their operated land in the 1970s. The richer groups have been resuming some of their land from the tenants to cultivate it with the help of hired labourers under their own supervision. In the 1950s and the early 1960s more people preferred to rent out part of their operated land as they found it more profitable to do so. So the share of poorer groups in total operated land was higher in the period 1951-72. And the share of land-rich groups was lower. But the situation has changed significantly in the 1970s as cultivation with hired labour has become more profitable following the inflow of modern inputs like seeds, fertilizer and, most important of all, irrigation pumps in this village since the late 1960s. Consequent upon this there has been some eviction of sharecroppers.

(3) The picture is more or less the same when we compile the distribution of effective land (i.e. the net operated land left after making the necessary rental share adjustments) amongst nine land-owning groups. Table 6.5 reveals that, on average, both per capita and per household effective land has declined over time. Compared

to the average figures, we notice significant differences between the poorer and the richer landowning groups.

As for the percentage command over effective land by different groups, we find wide differences between groups in all the cut off periods. As with operated land, the poorer groups appeared to have gained some land in the 1950s and the 1960s, but they have been loosing their effective control over the land as some of the rich farmers began to repossess the land and also the rental share deteriorated for the remaining tenants in recent years.

How the command over different categories of land by different groups of the peasantry varied in village 2 can be seen from tables 6.6, 6.7 and 6.8.

TABLE 6.6

VILLAGE 2: COMMAND OVER OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND BY LANDOWNING GROUPS: 1951-1981

LANDOWNING GROUPS	% of total owned cultivable land			Owned cultivable land per HH (acres)			Owned cultivable land per capita (acres)		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2.	.35	.29	1.64	.32	.27	.22	.09	.07	.05
3.	2.66	3.14	5.11	.90	.68	.99	.24	.17	.17
4.	2.00	11.05	10.08	1.82	1.85	1.63	.45	.48	.32
5.	5.08	10.23	13.33	2.78	2.65	2.78	.77	.64	.51
6.	10.75	14.55	11.20	4.19	4.15	3.63	1.22	.81	.59
7.	13.66	17.20	12.57	5.33	6.13	5.25	1.33	1.06	.75
8.	16.65	5.59	5.35	7.59	7.98	7.83	1.82	1.23	.98
9.	48.84	37.95	40.70	14.84	18.06	19.83	2.02	1.97	1.67
All Groups	99.99	100.00	99.98	5.36	3.52	2.41	1.24	.75	.44

TABLE 6.7

VILLAGE 2: COMMAND OVER OPERATED LAND BY LANDOWNING GROUPS: 1951-1981

LANDOWNING GROUPS	% of total operated land			Operated land per HH (acres)			Operated land per Capita (acres)		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	.82	0	2.26	.66	0	.23	.28	0	.05
2.	.81	.36	1.83	.65	.34	.26	.19	.08	.06
3.	4.22	3.78	5.90	1.28	.80	1.20	.34	.19	.21
4.	2.25	14.52	10.83	1.82	2.35	1.84	.45	.61	.36
5.	5.53	10.86	13.03	2.69	2.72	2.84	.74	.66	.53
6.	12.75	15.09	11.83	4.43	4.16	4.02	1.29	.82	.65
7.	14.21	17.26	11.90	4.94	5.95	5.20	1.23	1.03	.74
8.	16.44	5.28	4.91	6.67	7.28	7.50	1.60	1.12	.94
9.	42.97	32.83	37.48	11.62	15.10	19.11	1.58	1.65	1.61
All Groups	100.00	99.98	99.99	4.77	3.40	2.52	1.10	.73	.45

TABLE 6.8

VILLAGE 2: COMMAND OVER EFFECTIVE LAND BY LANDOWNING GROUPS: 1951-1981

LANDOWNING GROUPS	% of effective land			Effective land per HH (acres)			Effective land per Capita (acres)		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	.39	0	1.60	.33	0	.16	.14	0	.04
2.	.57	.31	1.75	.49	.29	.25	.15	.07	.05
3.	3.40	3.47	5.80	1.09	.75	1.17	.29	.18	.20
4.	2.12	12.90	10.72	1.82	2.15	1.80	.45	.56	.35
5.	5.12	10.38	12.90	2.64	2.67	2.78	.73	.65	.52
6.	11.99	14.94	11.68	4.42	4.23	3.92	1.29	.83	.64
7.	13.50	17.22	12.09	4.98	6.09	5.22	1.24	1.06	.75
8.	16.66	5.44	4.96	7.16	7.71	7.50	1.72	1.18	.94
9.	46.25	35.32	38.49	13.26	16.67	19.41	1.80	1.82	1.64
All Groups	100.00	99.98	99.99	5.06	3.49	2.50	1.17	.74	.45

(i) Table 6.6 shows a pattern of inequality similar to that depicted in the case of owned land in table 6.2B, though the concentration is worse in the case of owned cultivable land. Thus while the richest group (group 9) had command over about 48%, 37% and 40% of total owned land in 1951, 1972 and 1981 respectively, the same group commanded 49%, 38% and 41% own cultivable land in those years.

(ii) As for operated land, the situation in village 2 was slightly different to that in village 1. Irrigation and other modern inputs have not yet made sufficient inroads in village 2. A substantial proportion of rich households still rent out part of their land to the poorer and middle peasants. Compared to owned cultivable land, the share of operated land accuring to the richer groups is indeed smaller. The opposite is the case for the poorer peasantry. Immediately after the abolition of the Zamindari system, the richer groups, mostly jotedars, repossessed their rented-out land from poor tenants and hence we notice a very high share of operated land in the richer groups in the early fifties. But as the dust finally settled and the land reform Act of 1950 was effectively neutralised, they once again began to rent out land to poorer peasants. So their share in operated land dropped in the late 1950s and early 1960s. But in the 1970s, they appear to have increased their share somewhat, which indicates repossession of some of their rented out land from tenants. There appears to be a slight increase in the share of operated land in the poorer groups. But compared to the expansion in the number of households in this section of the peasantry (say groups 1 and 2) the increase in their share in operated land is negligible. This is reflected in the declining amount of per household and per capita operated land in the poorer groups.

(iii) We find a equally differential picture with respect of command over effective land. As can be seen in table 6.8, it is somewhat less skewed than owned cultivable land distribution and more skewed than operated land distribution. In any case, village 2, under the increasing pressure of population, and being deprived of the modern inputs of production, has been experiencing increasing 'immiserization' in the landholding sizes both in average and group terms. But in relative terms, the inequality situation

between the poorer and richer groups in fact, worsened over the three decades. However, the degree of difference has not been as pronounced as in village 1.

One may, however, argue that using landowning groups alone as one's basic reference groups precludes one from saying anything conclusively about the existence of inequalities. The tenancy system operating in Bangladesh over a long period, one may argue, must have had some moderating impact on inequality. To test this hypothesis, we have taken each of the remaining categories of land (i.e. owned cultivable, operated and effective) as the basic reference groups and then compiled individual distributions for each category. While doing so, we note some changes in distribution, especially with respect to operated land. But the changes were not so significant as to negate the broad trends of inequalities which we have observed in earlier tables. Tables 6.9, 6.10 and 6.11 summarize the findings in village 1.

TABLE 6.9

VILLAGE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND: 1951-1981

Owned cultivable land groups	% of Households			% of owned cultivable land		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	10.87	10.98	6.00	0	0	0
2.	4.35	20.81	35.00	.33	2.61	1.82
3.	15.21	19.07	18.50	4.39	8.74	7.78
4.	20.29	19.07	16.50	11.42	16.41	15.16
5.	10.87	9.83	6.00	9.49	12.03	8.08
6.	18.11	8.09	7.00	21.94	13.41	14.36
7.	9.42	4.62	3.50	16.80	11.87	10.49
8.	4.35	3.47	4.50	11.10	11.69	19.35
9.	6.52	4.05	3.00	24.53	23.23	22.95
All groups	99.99	99.99	100.00	100.00	99.99	99.99

TABLE 6.10

VILLAGE I: DISTRIBUITON OF OPERATED LAND: 1951-1981

Operated Landgroups	% of Households			% of Operated Land		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	10.87	10.40	25.50	0	0	0
2.	3.62	12.72	15.00	.49	1.44	1.94
3.	13.04	18.50	20.00	4.21	7.55	10.11
4.	20.29	22.54	14.00	12.53	18.00	13.12
5.	13.77	11.56	8.00	12.45	13.48	11.65
6.	19.56	11.56	6.00	24.74	18.70	11.94
7.	10.87	6.93	5.00	20.02	16.87	14.74
8.	3.62	2.89	3.50	9.50	9.97	15.08
9.	4.35	2.89	3.00	16.04	13.99	21.42
All Groups	99.99	99.99	100.00	99.98	100.00	100.00

TABLE 6.11

VILLAGE I: THE DISTRIBUTION OF EFFECTIVE LAND: 1951-1981

Effective Landgroups	% of Households			% of Effective Land		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	8.69	8.67	23.00	0	0	0
2.	5.07	16.76	17.00	.49	1.87	2.41
3.	12.32	19.07	21.50	3.23	7.92	10.74
4.	20.29	21.38	17.50	11.31	16.96	17.54
5.	15.22	12.14	4.00	12.81	14.42	6.07
6.	15.22	8.67	6.00	18.29	13.92	12.22
7.	13.76	6.94	4.50	23.68	16.97	13.38
8.	2.90	2.31	3.50	7.00	7.59	15.35
9.	6.52	4.05	3.00	23.17	20.33	22.28
All Groups	99.99	99.99	100.00	99.98	99.98	99.99

The preceding tables also reveal the differences emerging when we change the basic reference land groups.

(i) When we distribute owned cultivable land among the new reference groups (see table 6.9) we find the distribution as unequal as before. Taking groups 1 and 2 together, we find that although their proportion in the total households increased quite dramatically (from about 15% in 1951 to 31% in 1972 and 41% in 1981), their share in the total owned cultivable land did not increase at the same rate. In fact, in the later decade, their share declined. But for the richest two groups, while their proportion in the total households remained more or less at the same level (around 7%)their share in the total owned cultivable land increased from about 35% in 1951 to 42% in 1981. The seventies saw the higher rate of increase in these two groups than in 1950s and the 1960s.

(ii) The percentage of the landless households rose quite sharply when we compiled the distribution using operated land groups as the reference groups. The percentage change accelerated in the 1970s.

By contrast, the proportion of the richest two groups in the total households did not vary significantly (around 6%). But their command over operated land enhanced quite significantly (from 25% in 1951 to 36% in 1981). Although there were 138, 173 and 200 households in 1951, 1972 and 1981 respectively, there were actually 123, 155 and 149 farms[3] in those years. Thus, although the number of farms increased in the 1950s and 1960s, the trend has been reversed in the 1970s. The number of farms, in fact, declined even though the total number of households increased in the 1970s. This means that most of the households with a small amount of land have been renting out that land and joining the labour market as wage labourers. Another reason for the squeeze in the number of farms is the resumption of rented out land by the rich households in the 1970s.

(iii) The inequality situation was even worse with respect to the distribution of effective land, then was the case with operated land.

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[3] households who had ≥ 0 acre of operated land.

Using effective land groups as the reference group, we see in table 6.11 that the effective control over land by the land-rich groups improved in the 1970s compared to the earlier two decades. There was also a slight improvement in the share of effective land by the land poor groups, but the proportion of the households in these groups increased at a higher pace to offset than gain. In fact, the distribution of effective land in village 1 is, without doubt, unequal.

Using similar reference groups, we present three separate distributions of land in village 2 in order to capture the nature of inequalities there, too. Tables 6.12, 6.13 and 6.14 represent three distributions of land compiled for three cut off periods of 1951, 1972 and 1981.

TABLE 6.12

VILLAGE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND: 1951-1981

Owned Cultivable Land Groups	% of Households			% of Cultivable land		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	5.88	13.58	28.92	0	0	0
2.	5.88	6.17	12.40	.35	.27	1.64
3.	17.65	18.52	17.35	2.66	4.83	7.48
4.	5.88	20.99	13.22	2.00	12.14	11.75
5.	9.80	9.87	12.40	5.08	8.41	14.79
6.	13.72	11.11	6.61	10.74	13.59	12.00
7.	11.76	9.87	3.30	13.66	17.20	8.55
8.	11.76	2.47	.82	16.65	5.59	3.08
9.	17.65	7.40	4.96	48.84	37.95	40.70
All Groups	99.98	99.98	99.98	99.98	99.98	99.99

TABLE 6.13

VILLAGE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATED LAND: 1951-1981

Operated land groups	% of Households			% of Operated land		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	7.84	13.58	28.10	0	0	0
2.	3.92	7.40	12.40	.59	.60	1.48
3.	17.65	11.11	13.22	5.00	2.71	5.17
4.	13.72	23.46	14.05	7.74	14.50	11.94
5.	9.80	12.34	13.22	8.88	11.06	15.16
6.	3.92	11.11	8.26	5.33	13.82	14.88
7.	21.57	12.34	4.96	26.03	21.49	10.54
8.	9.80	2.47	1.65	17.26	5.86	6.31
9.	11.76	6.17	4.13	29.16	29.94	34.52
All groups	99.98	99.98	99.99	99.99	99.98	100.00

TABLE 6.14

VILLAGE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF EFFECTIVE LAND: 1951-1981

Effective Land Groups	% of Households			% of effective land		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1.	3.92	13.58	23.14	0	0	0
2.	5.88	6.17	14.87	.35	.42	1.75
3.	17.65	13.58	18.18	2.66	3.09	7.21
4.	11.76	22.22	14.05	2.00	12.87	11.41
5.	5.88	11.11	12.40	5.08	9.36	17.78
6.	7.84	12.34	6.61	10.74	14.43	11.90
7.	21.57	12.34	4.96	13.66	21.62	11.78
8.	7.84	1.24	1.65	16.65	2.88	6.06
9.	17.65	7.40	4.13	48.84	35.32	35.08
All groups	99.99	99.98	99.99	99.98	99.99	99.97

We get a similar picture of inequalities in village 2 from tables 6.12, 6.13 and 6.14.

(i) As is indicated by table 6.12, although the proportion of households in the poorest stratum[4] (including groups 1, 2 and 3) increased considerably (from about 29% in 1951 to about 38% in 1972 and about 59% in 1981), the corresponding share of owned cultivable land were only 3%, 5% and 9% for this section of the peasantry. Two sets of figures do not really correspond in proportional terms. So the share of owned cultivable land per household and per capita must have dropped dramatically in recent years. But for the richest group (owning more than 10.01 acres of cultivable land) while the proportion in total households declined so abruptly (from 17.65% in 1951 to 7.40% in 1972 and to 4.96% in 1981), the corresponding shares in the total owned cultivable land did not vary that much (from 48.84% in 1951 to 37.95% in 1972 and to 40.70% in 1981). That means the average per household figures must have been much higher during the later period (i.e. 1970s). The inequality situation has thus further worsened.

(ii) We have used operated land groups as the reference groups in table 6.13 for village 2. The distribution, though slightly more equitable than in the others, is skewed enough to cause concern. Although the proportion of households increased significantly in the poorest stratum (from 29% to 54% in between 1951 and 1981), their share in the operated land remained almost the same (5.99% in 1951 compared to 6.65% in 1981).

By contrast, in the richest stratum whereas the proportion of households actually dropped from 11.76% in 1951 to only 4.13% in 1981, their share in the total operated land improved (from 29.16% in 1951 to 34.52% in 1981). This suggests that the richer households have been resuming some of their erst while rented out land from tenants.

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4 Note that we have included group 3 in the poorest group as the productivity of land in village 2 is lower than that in village 1. This calls for group re-adjustments.

This is also supported by the fact that the number of farms has not been increasing at the same rate in recent years as earlier. There were 47 farms in 1951. The number increased to 70 in 1972 and to 87 in 1981.

So our fieldwork findings indicate quite clearly that the inequality situation has been worsening over time and commitantly the concentration of land in the hands of a few households has been gaining momentum. We now turn to an estimate to the extent of that concentration.

7.2. CONCENTRATION OF LAND:

We have pursued two empirical exercises to estimate the extent of concentration of land:

(1) We calculated the concentration ratios (more precisely Gini co-efficients, see Sen, 1972: 31) for 1951, 1972 and 1981 using the following formula.

$$G = 1 + \frac{1}{n} - \left(\frac{2}{n^2 M}\right)(y_1 + 2y_2 + \cdots \cdots n\, y_n).$$

Where n = number of observations (here number of household)

$y_1, y_2, \ldots y_n$ = the characteristics (i.e. landholding size),

where $y_1 \geqslant y_2 \geqslant y \cdots \geqslant y_n$

M = the mean of the characteristics (i.e. average landholding size).

(2) We computed the relative shares in different categories of land of two polar groups of the households:

(a) the bottom 60% of the households and
(b) the top 10% of the households.

Groups (a) and (b) roughly correspond to the poor and prosperous peasantry. We then compared these relative shares graphically.

Using data on land for 1951, 1972 and 1981 we have calculated concentration ratios for both the villages. They are given in Table 6.15.

TABLE 6.15

CONCENTRATION RATIOS: 1951-1981

LAND CATEGORIES	CONCENTRATION RATIOS					
	VILLAGE - 1			VILLAGE - 2		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1. Owned land	.51	.58	.66	.49	.56	.70
2. Owned cultivable land	.50	.59	.68	.48	.57	.71
3. Operated land	.47	.53	.68	.43	.55	.68
4. Effective land	.44	.54	.68	.46	.58	.68

	CHANGES IN CONCENTRATION RATIOS			
	VILLAGE - 1		VILLAGE - 2	
	1951-1972	1972-1981	1951-1972	1972-1981
1. Owned land	.07	.08	.07	.14
2. Owned cultivable land	.09	.09	.09	.14
3. Operated land	.06	.05	.12	.13
4. Effective land	.10	.14	.12	.10

	ANNUAL % CHANGE IN CONCENTRATION RATIOS			
	VILLAGE - 1		VILLAGE - 2	
	1951-1972	1972-1981	1951-1972	1972-1981
1. Owned land	+.65	+1.53	+.68	+2.77
2 Owned cultivable land	+.85	+1.69	+.89	+2.34
3. Operated land	+.60	+1.04	+1.32	+2.62
4. Effective land	+1.08	+2.80	+1.24	+1.91

Table 6.15 reveals that concentration has been increasing consistently since the early 1950s and that the rate of increase has been greater in the 1970s. It also reveals that the extent of concentration was greater in village 2 - a typical feature of a North Bengal village.

(i) In village 1, the concentration ratio for owned land increased by an amount of .07 between 1951 and 1972 and by an amount of .08 between 1972 and 1981. The annual percentage changes for those two periods were +.65 and +1.53 respectively.

In village 2, the corresponding increases for owned land were .07 and .14. The annual % changes were +.68 and +2.77.

(ii) The increase in the concentration of operated land was relatively small in the 1950s and 1960s in village 1 (and not in village 2). But the change has been quite significant in the 1970s in both the villages. This confirms our earlier suggestion that the rich peasantry was repossessing some of their rented out land from the poor tenants to operate under their own supervision with the help of hired labourers.

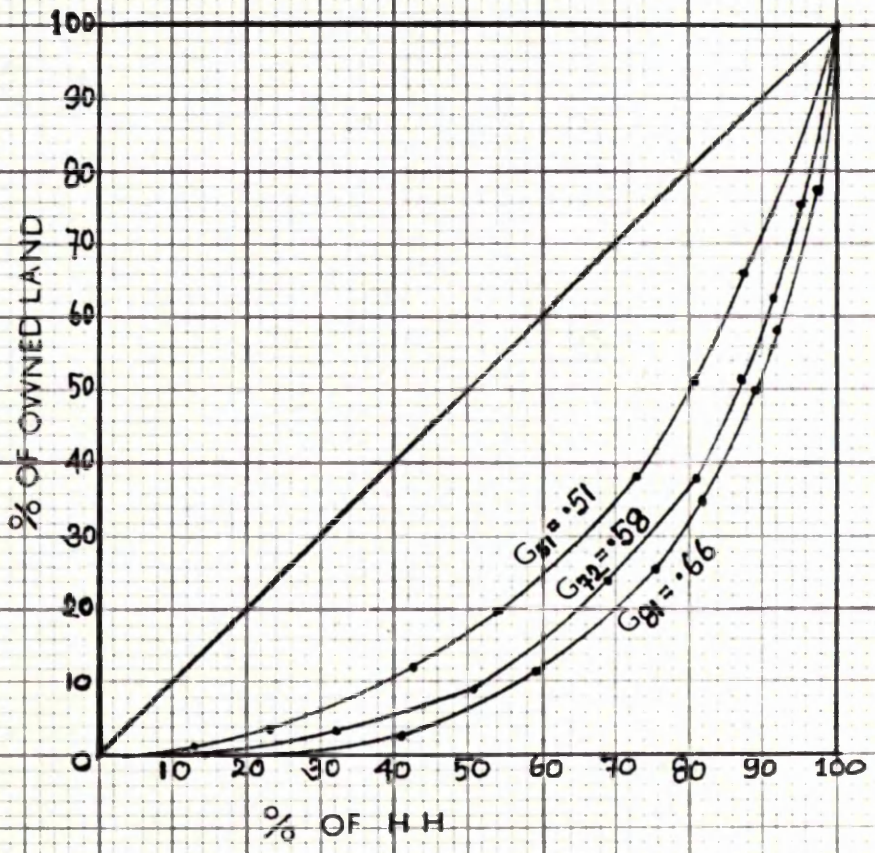
(iii) The trend in the concentration of effective land also supports the above hypothesis. In fact, in village 1, the concentration has been the higher in both the periods compared to the other categories of land. Concentration of effective land in village 2, is also quite high but not the highest. This suggests that some sort of land adjustments do still take place in village 2.

The pattern of concentration which we have noted can also be demonstrated with the help of the Lorenz Curve. Graphs 6(i) and 6(ii) represent two Lorenz Curves for villages 1 and 2 . We have drawn these Lorenz Curves only for owned land distribution of the three reference periods - 1951, 1972 and 1981. Here households have been taken as proxy for population and the land as proxy for income.

GRAPH 6 :

VILLAGE - 1 : LORENZ CURVES

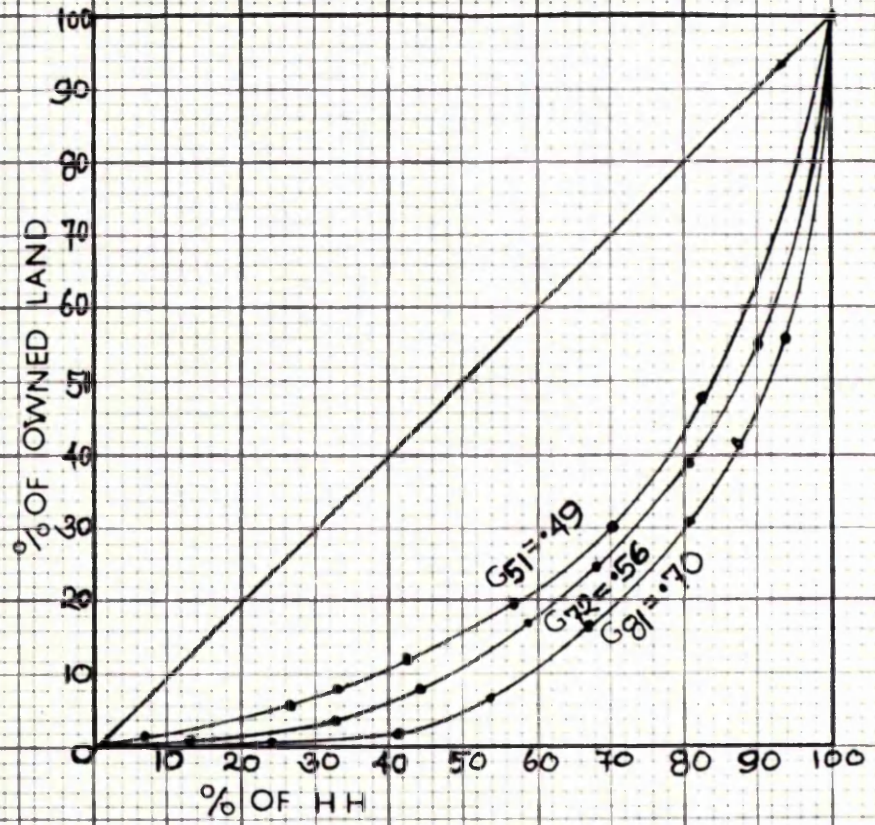
1951 - 1981



GRAPH 6.ii

VILLAGE-2: LORENZ CURVES

1951–1981



As we can see from graph 6(i) and 6(ii), the slope of the Lorenz Curve has increased consistently over time in both villages. The graphs also show greater inequality in the 1970s as the Lorenz Curve for 1981 has moved further from the diagonal in both villages.

That inequality has been increasing can also be confirmed by computing the relative shares of land (all categories) of two polar groups of the households (i.e. (a) the bottom 60% and (b) the top 10% .)

Table 6.16 shows the changes, in the relative shares of those two polar groups for village 1. Table 6.17 shows the same thing for village 2.

TABLE 6.16

VILLAGE I: RELATIVE SHARES OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF LAND BY A) BOTTOM 60% AND B) TOP 10% OF THE HOUSEHOLDS: 1951-1981

Land Categories:	Share of bottom 60% of HH			Share of top 10% of HH		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1. Owned land	24.35	18.81	12.00	34.81	41.25	47.85
2. Owned cultivable land	24.48	18.34	9.93	33.91	41.03	50.28
3. Operated land	29.57	25.54	14.71	28.37	32.87	45.70
4. Effective land	27.93	22.44	13.08	31.32	36.92	47.99
5. Homestead land	23.31	23.79	34.51	41.80	43.87	21.42
	PERCENTAGE CHANGES					
	1951-72	1972-81		1951-72	1972-81	
1. Owned land	-5.54	-6.18		+6.44	+6.81	
2. Owned cultivable land	-6.14	-8.41		+7.12	+9.25	
3. Operated land	-4.03	-10.83		+4.50	+12.83	
4. Effective land	-8.88	-9.30		+5.60	+11.07	
5. Homestead land	+0.48	+10.72		+2.04	-22.42	
	INDEX					
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1. Owned land	100.00	77.31	49.32	100.00	118.50	137.46
2. Owned cultivable land	100.00	74.91	40.56	100.00	120.99	148.27
3. Operated land	100.00	86.37	49.74	100.00	115.86	161.08
4. Effective land	100.00	80.34	46.83	100.00	117.84	153.22
5. Homestead land	100.00	102.05	148.04	100.00	104.95	51.24

TABLE 6.17

VILLAGE 2: RELATIVE SHARES OF DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF LAND BY A) BOTTOM 60% AND B) TOP 10% OF THE HOUSEHOLDS: 1951-1981

Land Categories:	Share of bottom 60% (In Percentages)			Share of top 10% (In percentages)		
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1. Owned land	24.53	19.32	10.90	29.69	42.34	53.85
2. Owned cultivable land	24.77	18.29	10.57	29.31	43.54	54.03
3. Operated land	31.20	23.28	13.70	21.89	38.11	49.89
4. Effective land	27.95	20.86	13.03	25.46	40.76	51.04
5. Homestead land	22.17	31.59	13.21	33.47	26.20	52.60
	PERCENTAGE CHANGES					
	1951-72		1972-81	1951-72		1972-81
1. Owned land	-5.21		-8.42	+12.65		+11.51
2. Owned cultivable land	-6.48		-7.72	+14.23		+10.49
3. Operated land	-7.92		-9.58	+16.22		+11.78
4. Effective land	-7.09		-7.83	+15.30		+10.20
5. Homestead land	+9.42		-18.38	-7.27		+26.40
	INDEX					
	1951	1972	1981	1951	1972	1981
1. Owned land	100.00	78.76	44.43	100.00	142.60	181.37
2. Owned Cultivable land	100.00	73.83	42.67	100.00	148.55	184.34
3. Operated land	100.00	74.61	43.91	100.00	174.09	227.91
4. Effective land	100.00	74.63	46.62	100.00	160.09	200.47
5. Homestead land	100.00	142.49	59.58	100.00	78.28	157.15

Tables 6.16 and 6.17 show the secular decline in the shares of the bottom 60% of households and dramatic rise in the shares of the top 10% of the households in both the villages. Thus:

(i) While the bottom 60% of the households of village 1 owned 24.35% of total land in 1951, their share has fallen to only 12.00% by 1981. Similarly in village 2, the bottom 60% of households owned 24.53% of land in 1951 and the share has reduced to only 10.90% in 1981. The same thing is true for other categories of land, except in the case of homestead land. The rate of decline has been sharper in the 1970s. Within a short span of thirty years, the share of the bottom section of the peasantry reduced to half of what they had initially. The slight increase in the share of the homestead land by the poorer section may be due to the sheer increase in the number of households in this group. Most households would sell off their homestead land only at the very last moment. It is their last resort. Hence, as more households came down to the rank of the bottom 60% of the households, their share in the total homestead land also increased.

(ii) At the other end of the spectrum, the top 10% of households have been gaining land consistently and the pace of the enlargement of their holdings has been greater in the 1970s in both the villages.

In village 1, while the top 10% of households owned 34.81% of the total land in 1951, the share increased to 47.85% in 1981. In village 2, the change has been even more spectacular. The top 10% owned 29.69% of total land in 1951, and their share has risen to 53.83% in 1981.

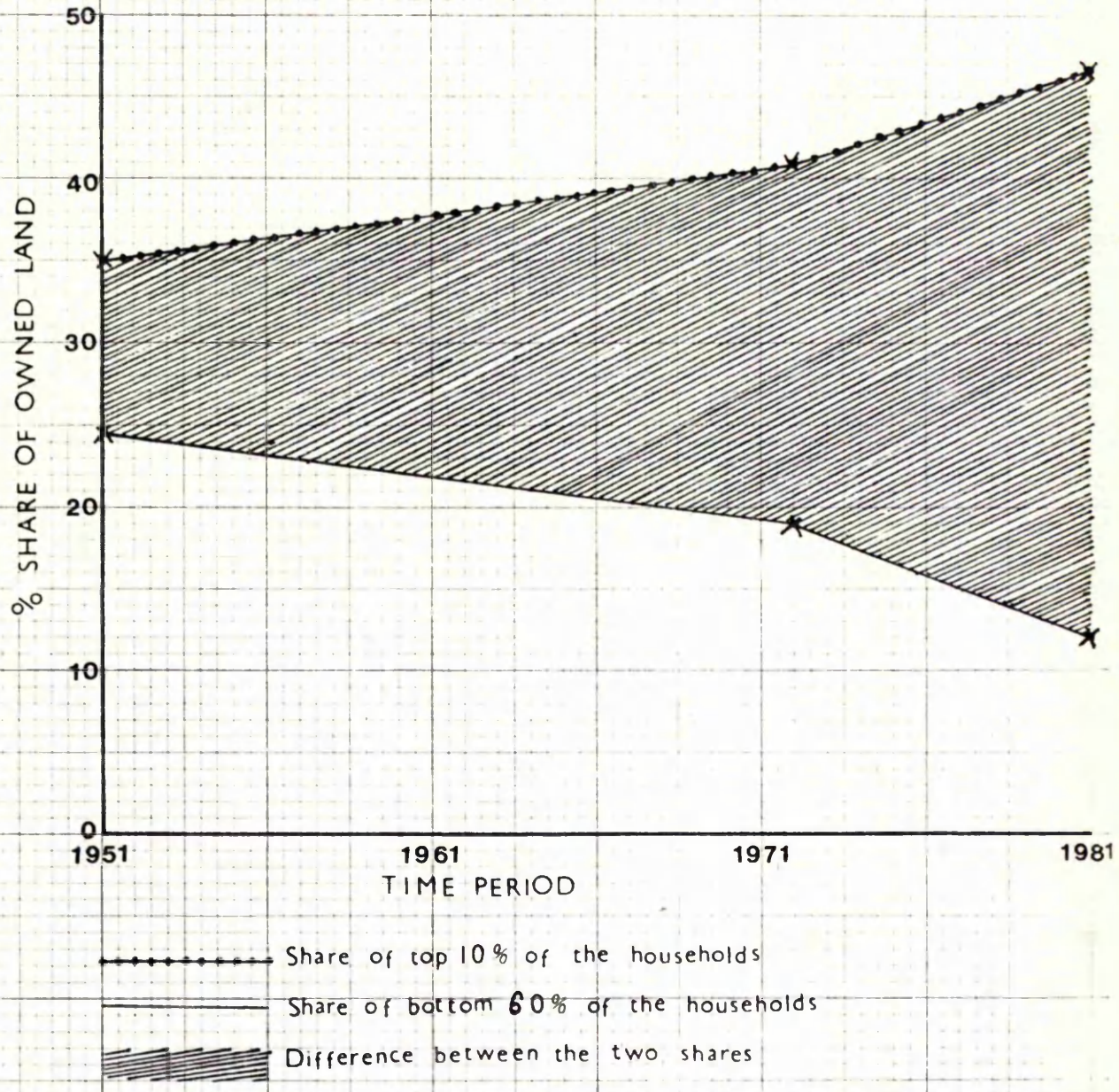
(iii) But the greatest change can be noticed in the case of operated land. In both the villages, the richer section of the peasantry has been enlarging its share of operated holdings over time. This section operated 31.32% in 1951 in village 1. It increased to 47.99% in 1981. Again in village 2, the corresponding shares were 25.46% and 51.04%.

It has been argued that richer peasants in North Bengal (in the region in which our village 2 lies) have been keen to rent out most of their land to tenants while they themselves would do very little cultivation as supervisory farmers (see Wood, 1977:5). This was, no doubt, true in the 1950s and earlier (as testified by Mukherjee, 1957). But the situation has began to change in the late 1960s as the drive for modernisation increased and the pressure on land also grew with the growth of family members.

The glaring contrast between the relative shares of two polar groups of the peasantry can be better demonstrated with the help of graphs. Grahps 6 (iii) and 6(iv) project the relative shares of these two groups in the total owned and operated land respectively. Graphs 6(v) and 6(vi) show the same for village 2. The shaded part in the graph shows how fast the differences between the shares of top and bottom sections of the peasantry have been widening over time. The bulging shape of the graph on the right illustrates the greater inequality in recent years.

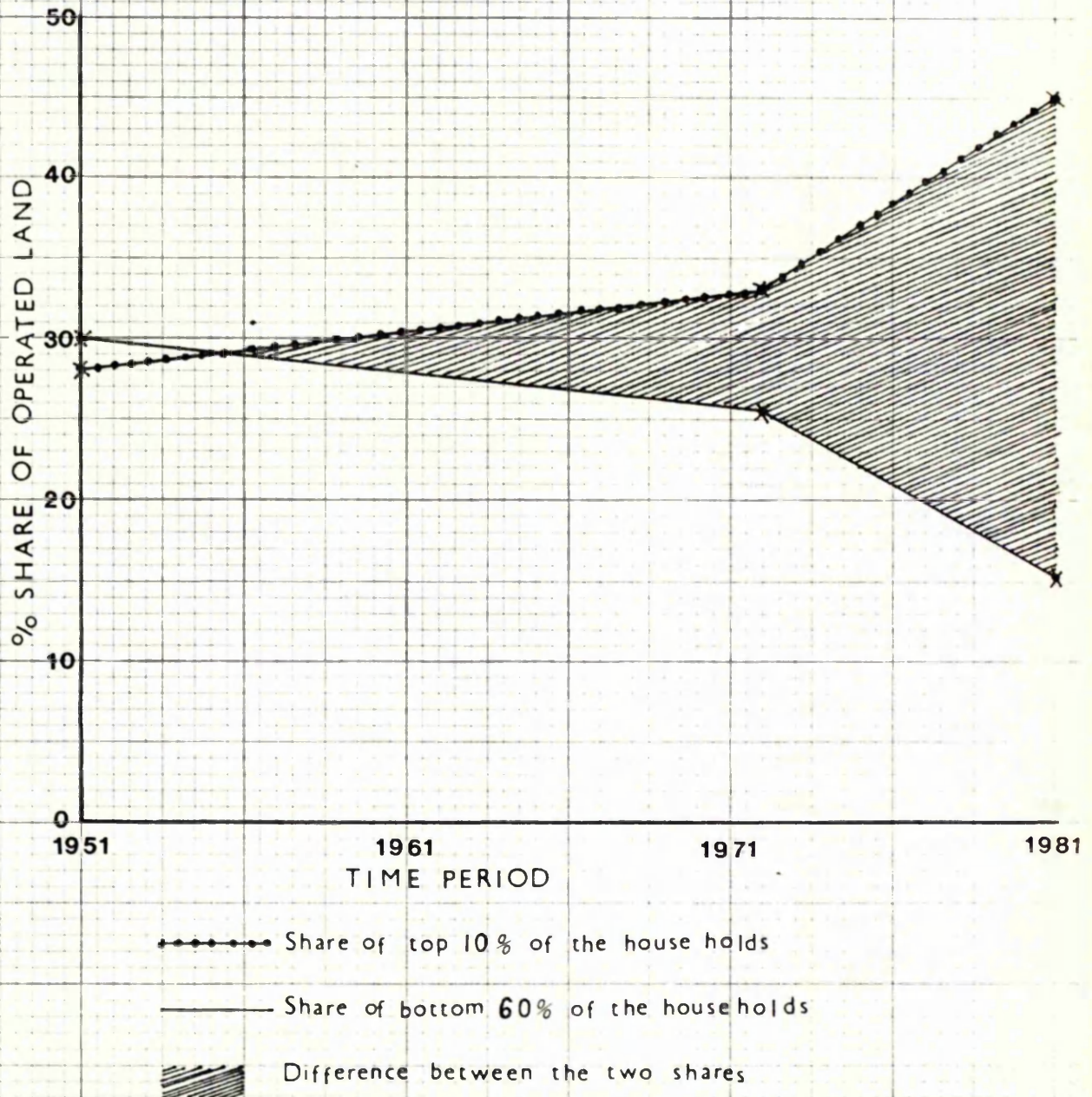
GRAPH 6·iii

Village-I: Differences between the shares of top 10% and bottom 60% of the households in total owned land : 1951-1981



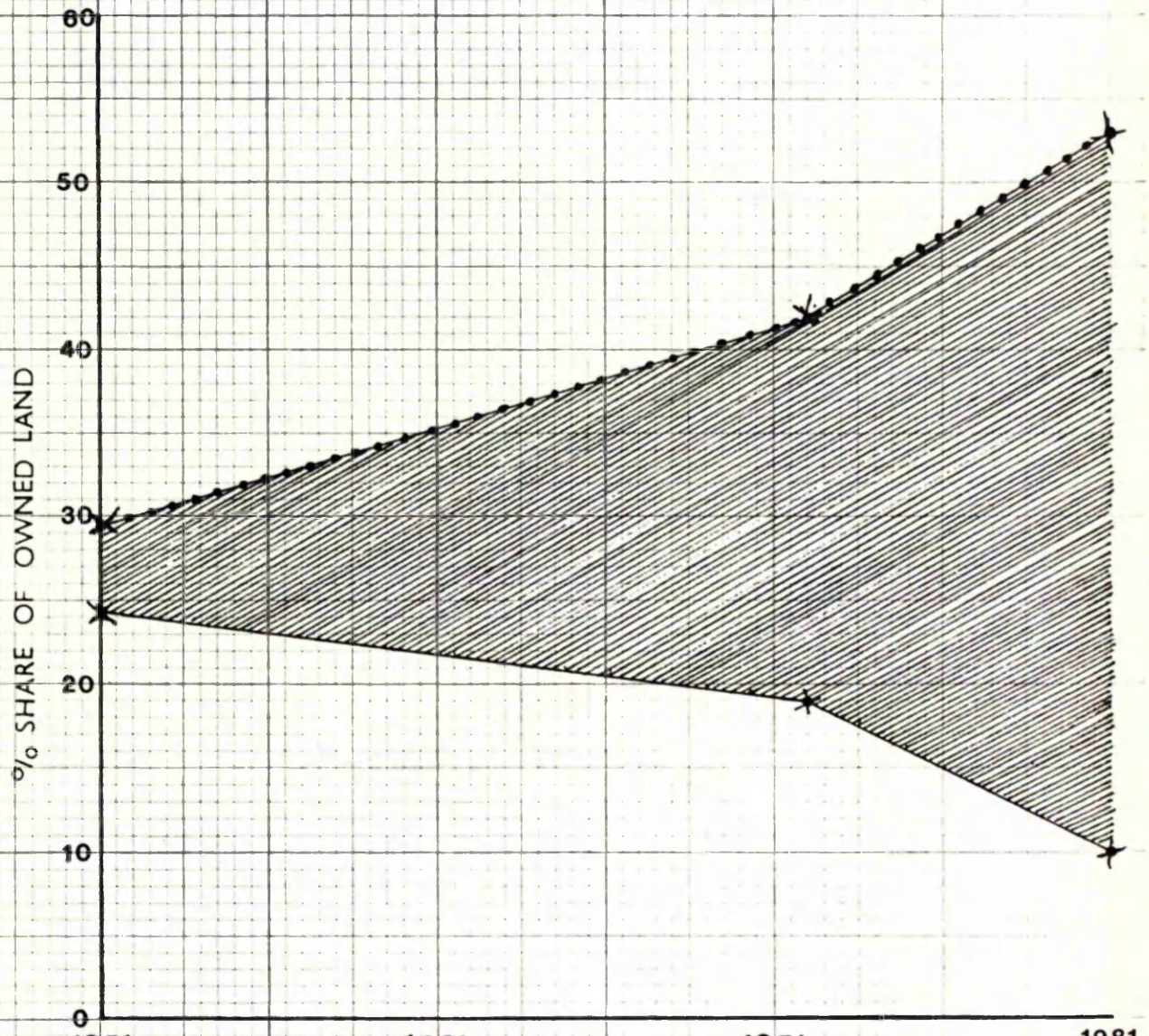
GRAPH 6·iV

Village - I: Differences between the shares of top 10% and bottom 60 % of the households in total operated land: 1951 - 1981



GRAPH 6·V

Village – 2 : Differences between the shares of top 10% and bottom 60% of the households in total owned land : 1951 – 81



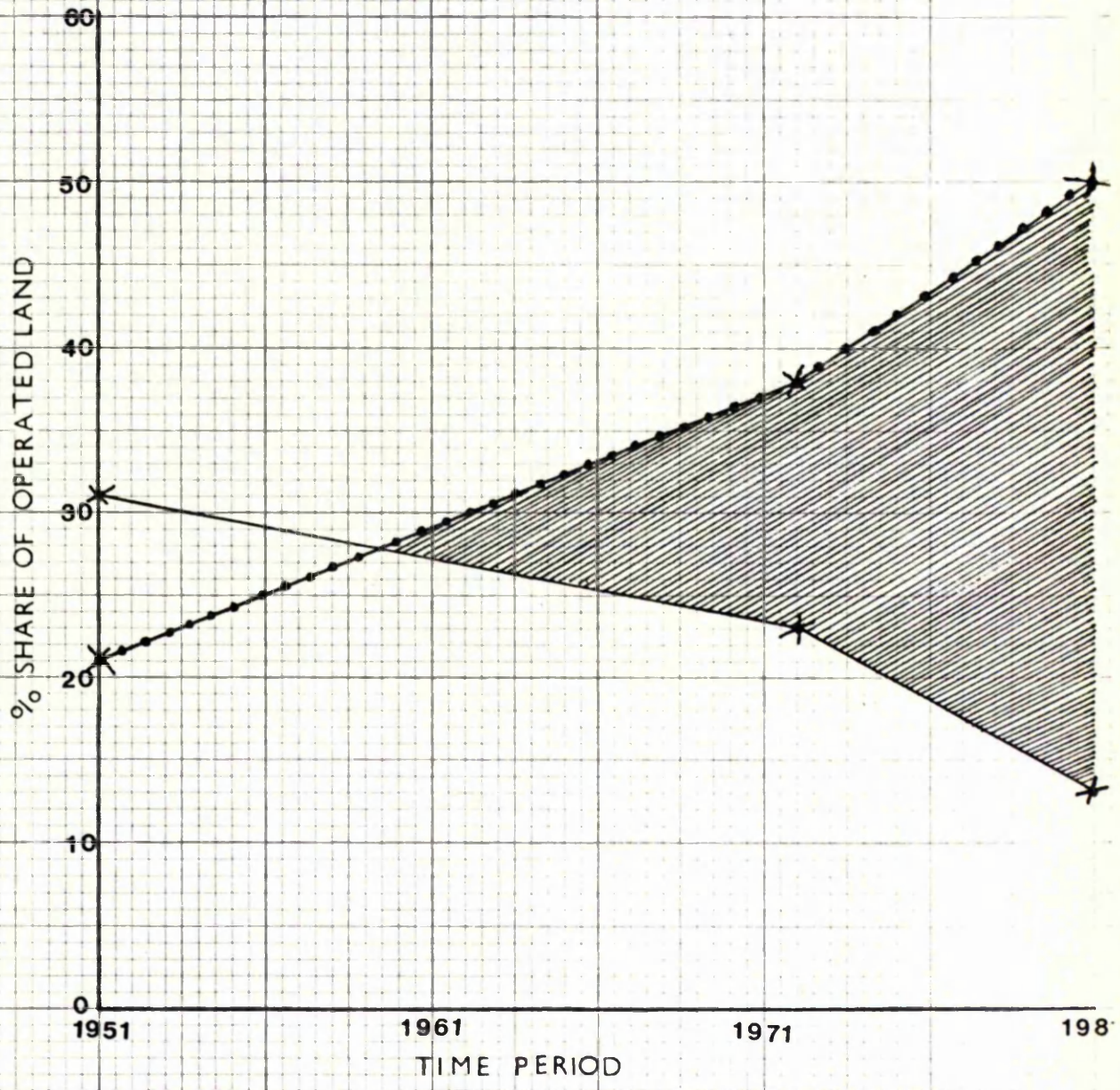
Share of top 10% of the households

Share of bottom 60 % of the households

Difference between the two shares

GRAPH 6·vi

Village-2: Difference between the shares of top 10% and bottom 60% of the households in total operated land: 1951 - 81



Share of top 10% of the households

Share of bottom 60% of the households

Difference between the two shares

As can be seen in the graphs, the inequality situation has worsened in the last three decades and it is more unequal for the operated land.

The shares of operated land for two groups reached a break-even point in the early 1950s in village 1 and in the late 1950s in village 2. And after that, the gap began to widen. In the 1970s, the gap became indeed very wide., confirming our suggestion that the richer households were enlarging the share in the operated land at the cost of the poorer peasantry.

So both the tests in turn (Gini Co-efficients and Relative Shares) lend support to our hypothesis that the concentration of land (all categories) has been on the increase and that the speed of that has been certainly greater in the 1970s.

CASE STUDIES:

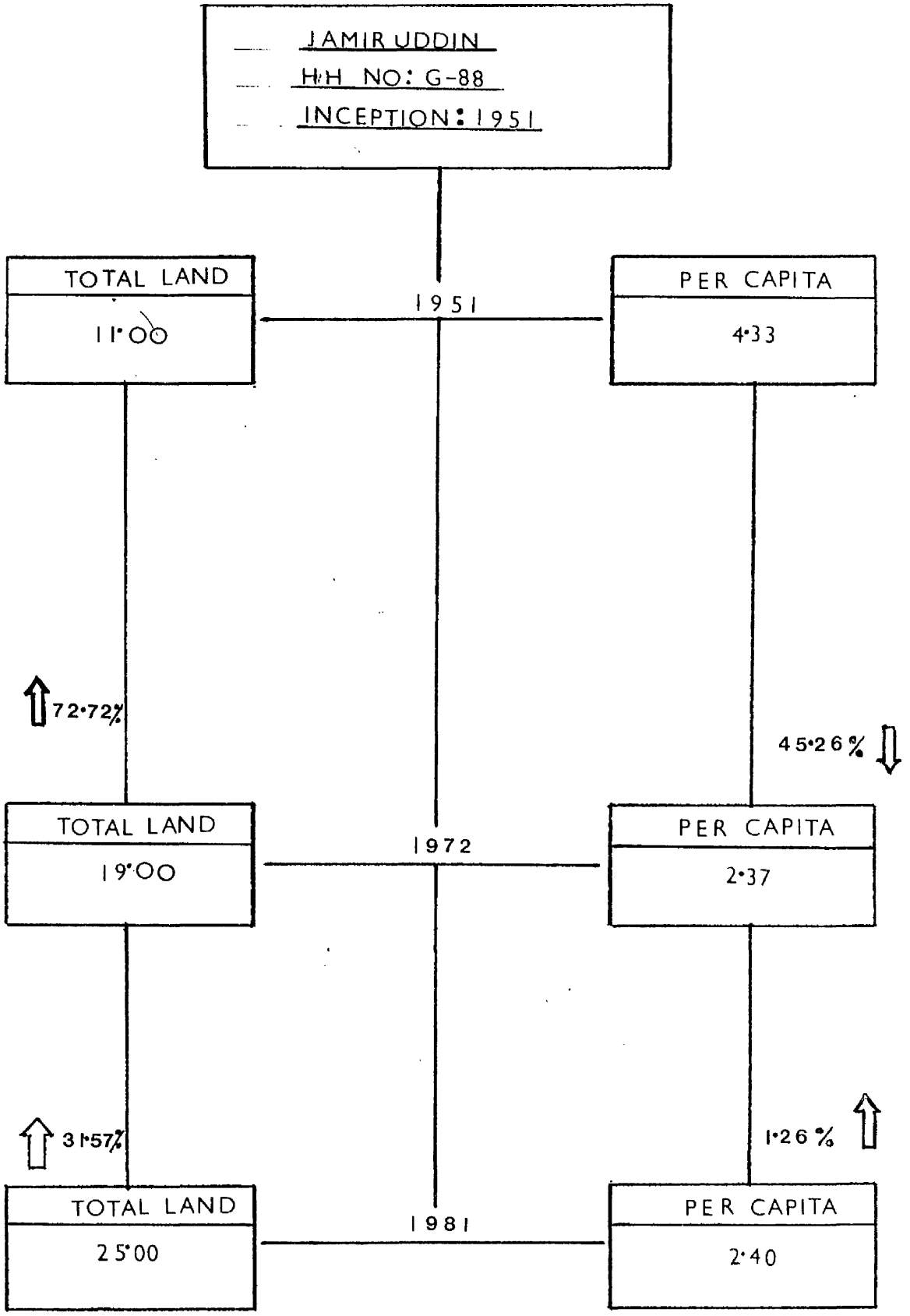
We have looked into three households in depth to give a feel to how the processes of concentration and dispossession of land are working.

Case Study I reveals the changes in the landownership of Jamir Uddin (Household No G-88) from village 1. He was already rich when he became the household head and he increased his landholding size by more than double within the span of the last thirty years. Although the per capita land in his household declined significantly within this period, the figure is still very high compared to other households.

Case Study II presents a precarious condition of a middle peasant, Zahir Uddin Munshi. He became household head in 1956 with 3 acres of land. He has been trying very hard to hold on with that amount, even though his family members have more than trebled (as indicated by drastically reduced per capita landholding). But by 1981, he has already lost some land and as is clear from the turbulent time in his household, it is very unlikely that he will be able to remain a middle peasant. His family is indeed sliding down the social scale.

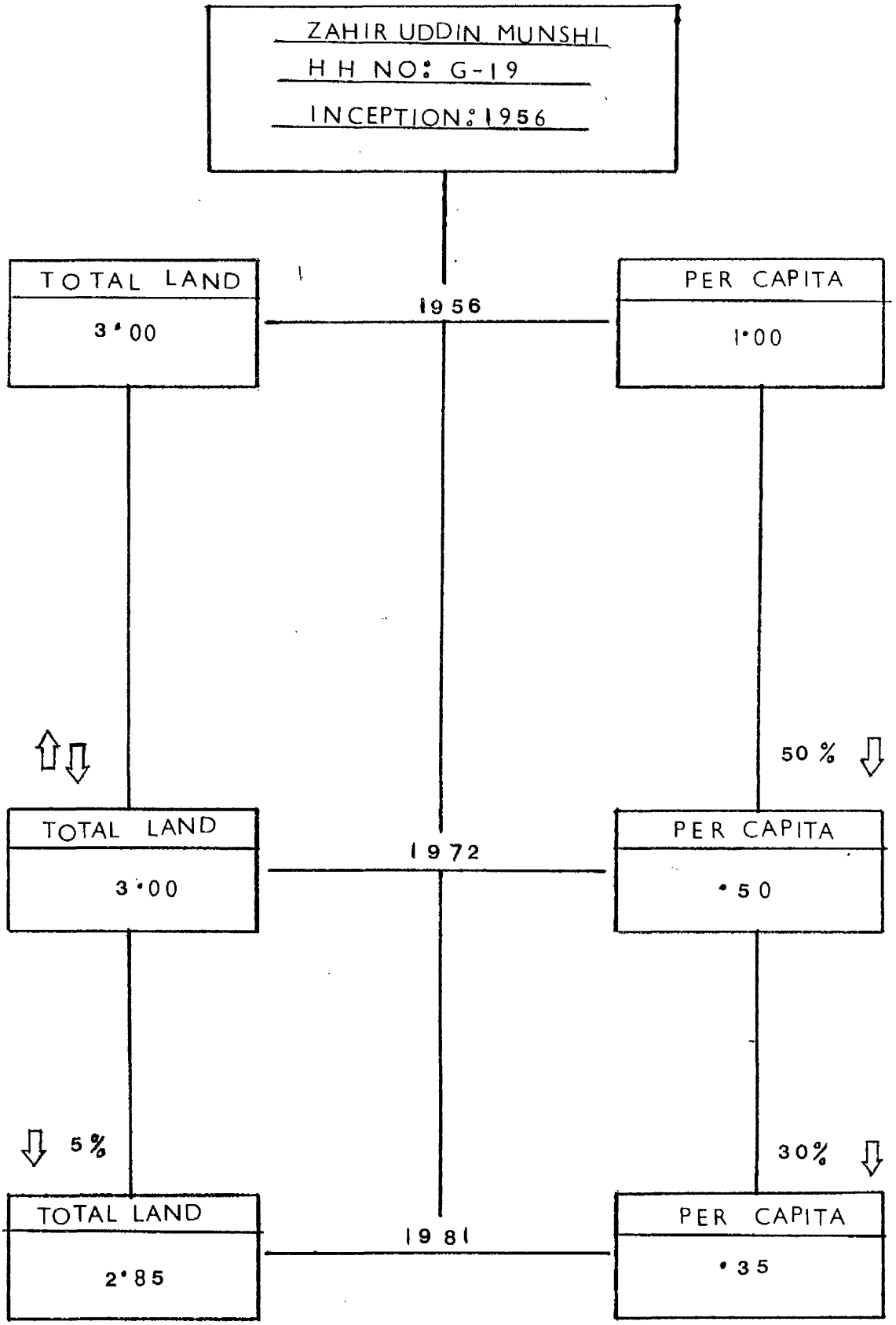
Case Study III demonstrates the fast deterioration of the landholding position of poor Hasen Ali. He became a household head in 1961 with 1.50 (per capita land .75 acre) acres of land and has lost about half of that land in the face of increasing economic pressure. He owned only .88 acres of land (per capita land as low as .09 acre) in 1981. He is a panperised household. All these case studies are demonstrated through the charts attached.

CASE : I



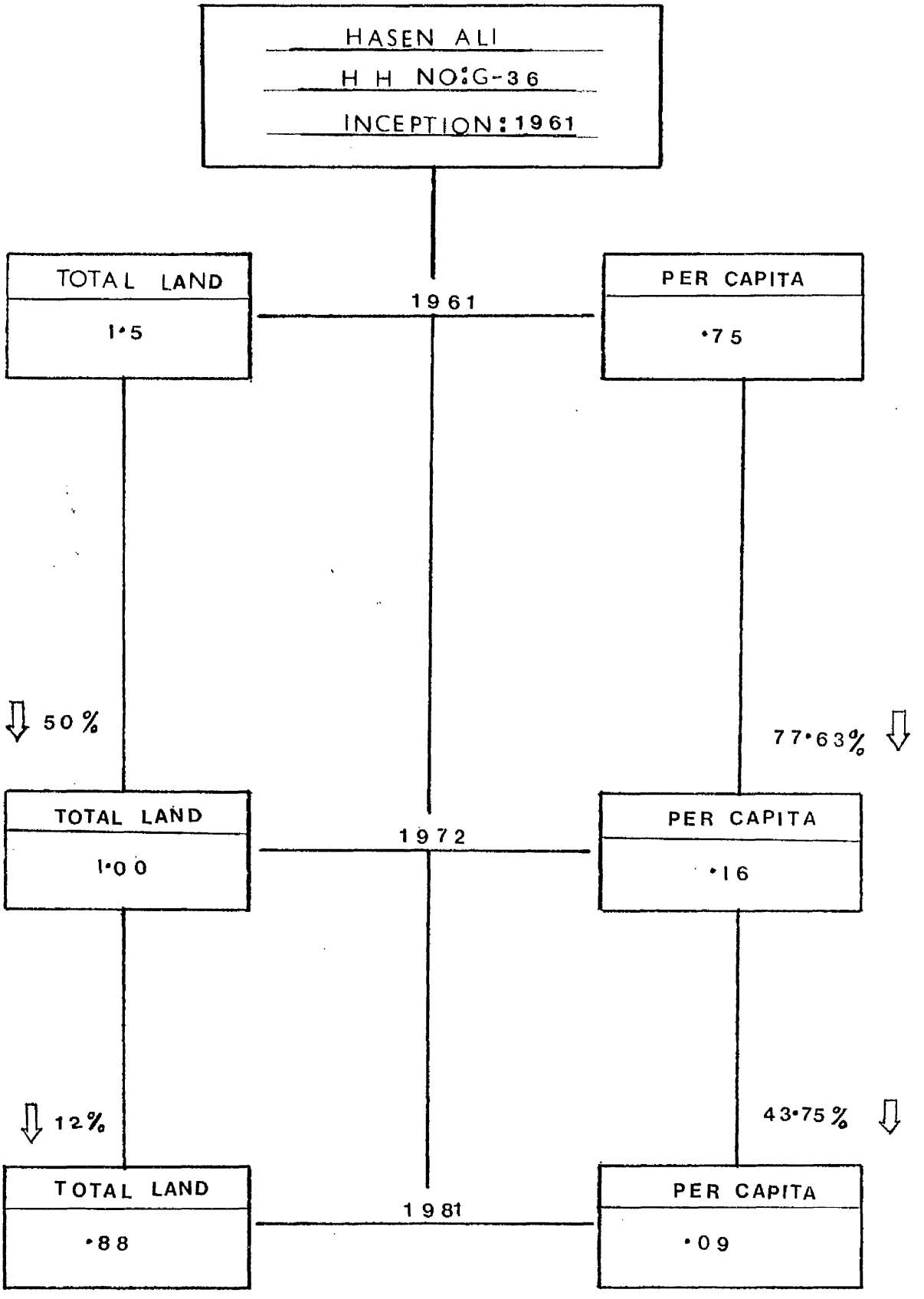
(Land figures in acres)

CASE : 2



(Land figures in acres)

CASE: 3



(Land figures in acres)

CONCLUSION:

The concentration of land in the hands of a few has increased in both villages. Simultaneously, we observed a fast increase in the ranks of the landless:

(i) Households owning less than half an acre of land (including the landless ones) comprised about 14% of total households in village 1 and 12% in village 2 in 1951. They increased to 41% in both villages in 1981. They owned .38% of total land in 1951 and the figure rose to 3.06% in 1981 in the case of village 1. The corresponding figures for village 2 were .37% and 1.90%. Most of this was again homestead land.

(ii) Rich households owning more than 7.50 acres of land controlled most of the land, owned and operated. In village 1, these households comprised 16% of total households in 1951 and owned 47% of total owned. While the proportion of households shrank to 7.5% in 1981, they still owned 40% of total land. In village 2, we observed a similar concentration.

(iii) Gini-co-efficients calculated from our data also indicated growing concentration in both villages.

(iv) Middle groups of the peasantry were observed to be under tremendous economic pressure and some of them have fallen off the social ladder.

CHAPTER VII

DIFFERENCES IN THE OWNERSHIP OF OTHER MATERIAL ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTION

Land, though the most important of all the means of production, cannot alone determine the material aspects of production in a Bangladesh village. It has to be complemented with other material elements, such as animals, especially draught animals, farming implements and inputs of production including capital and other assets. But no one can deny the basic importance of land in the over-all socio-economic structure of rural Bangladesh. In fact, as we shall see in this chapter, the nature of the distribution of all other material elements of production seems to be closely correlated to that of land.

1. Distribution of Draught Animals:

Our field investigation reveals that the total number of draught animals has been declining over time in both the study villages since 1972. There were 288 draught animals in village-1 in 1972. This figure dropped to 263 by 1981. The corresponding numbers for village-2 were 228 and 183. The per household figures for village-1 were 1.66 and 1.31 in 1972 and 1981 respectively. Those for village-2 were 2.81 and 1.46. This means that there has beem a decline in the average number of draught animals per household in both both the villages. Falling average figure for the whole village should not, however, obscure the differential rates of dispossessionof draught animals in different groups of the peasantry. The greatest losers have been the middle and the small peasantry. The rich peasants, in most cases, have improved their position as owners of draught animals in relative terms. We get this trend from tables 7.1 and 7.2.

In table 7.1 we have distributed the households who had atleast one draught animal. In both the villages we notice an increase in the proportion of such households in the landowning group-1 in between 1972 and 1981. One explanation is that there has been an increase in the proportion of landless households. More households have been dispossed of their land. Even though they lost their last bit of land, they continued to possess some draught animals (in most cases a single or a pair only). They had managed to operate some land (in some cases cultivating their erstwhile owned land as tenants of the new owners). But there was tremendous economic pressure on them to sell these animals and many of our respondents were not sure at the time of interview as to how long they could withstand

TABLE 7.1

PROPORTION OF HOUSEHOLDS OWNING ATLEAST ONE DRAUGHT ANIMAL IN EACH OF THE LANDOWNINGGROUPS : 1972-1981

LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)	VILLAGE-1		VILLAGE-2	
	% of HH		% of HH	
	1972	1981	1972	1981
1. 0	50.00	58.33	18.18	27.58
2. 0-.50	25.01	22.85	33.33	23.80
3. .51-1.50	57.69	56.75	46.15	53.33
4. 1.51-2.50	78.37	69.69	76.47	83.33
5. 2.51-3.50	88.13	66.66	90.90	85.71
6. 3.51-5.00	100.00	92.85	100.00	100.00
7. 5.01-7.50	100.00	100.00	100.00	85.71
8. 7.51-10.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
9. 10.01 +	100.00	100.00	90.90	83.33

TABLE 7.2

PERCENTAGE AND PER HOUSEHOLD DISTRIBUTION OF DRAUGHT ANIMALS AMONGST LANDOWNING GROUPS: 1972-1981

LAND OWNING GROUPS	VILLAGE - 1				VILLAGE 2			
	% OF TOTAL DRAUGHT ANIMALS OWNED		DRAUGHT ANIMALS OWNED PER HH		% OF TOTAL DRAUGHT ANIMALS OWNED		DRAUGHT ANIMALS OWNED PER HH	
	1972	1981	1972	1981	1972	1981	1972	1981
1.	2.08	3.80	.75	.83	.87	4.52	.18	.27
2.	3.12	4.40	.20	.42	.43	4.52	.33	.30
3.	8.33	7.10	.92	.88	3.94	11.29	.69	1.00
4.	17.36	14.68	1.35	1.28	14.91	14.86	2.00	1.44
5.	17.71	15.81	2.83	1.58	10.08	11.12	2.09	2.00
6.	15.97	13.40	2.55	2.50	14.47	12.27	3.30	3.42
7.	9.29	13.56	3.00	3.00	10.52	11.52	3.00	3.42
8.	10.85	8.86	5.28	3.55	3.94	4.51	4.00	4.50
9.	15.27	18.38	6.28	4.33	21.92	25.38	6.33	5.83
ALL GROUPS	99.98	99.99	1.66	1.31	99.99	99.99	2.81	1.46
BOTTOM 60% OF HH	25.78	15.80	.76	.66	25.07	24.33	1.07	.76
TOP 10% OF HH	31.31	36.74	4.89	3.60	30.05	34.31	6.30	3.76

the pressure. The extent of dispossession of draught animals amongst the poorer groups was higher in village-1. Many poor peasants have sold off their only draught animal and joined the full-time profession of agricultural wage labourers. In village-2, the opportunity of wage employment being limited, they still continued to possess their draught animals and remained share-croppers, even on disadvantageous terms. In most cases the rich peasants in village-1 managed to maintain their original position. There were , however, some exceptions in village-2.

Table 7.2 reveals a diverse picture. The poorer households have been losing their share in the ownership of draught animals and the richer ones have been improving their share in percentage terms. In per household terms, though the amount has been decreasing for both groups, the inequality remains.

i) The bottom 60% of households in village-1 owned one quarter of the total draught animals in 1972 and they owned on average 0.76 draught animals per household. Their share dropped to 15.80% in 1981. The per household figure, too, dropped to 0.66. A similar trend was also observed in village-2. The bottom 60% of households in village-2 owned 25.07% of draught animals in 1972 and the proportion dropped to 24.33 % in 1981. The per household figures dropped from 1.07 in 1972 to 0.76 in 1981.

ii) By contrast, the top 10 % of households improved their position during the 1970s. While they owned 31.31% in 1972 in village-1, the proportion increased to 36.74 % in 1981. The per household figures were 4.89 and 3.76 in 1972 and 1981. Although the per household figure for the top 10 % of households declined in 1981 it still was atleast six times higher than that of the bottom 60 % of households. In village-2, the top 10 % of households owned 30.05 $\frac{1}{2}$ of draught animals(6.30 per household) in 1972 and 34.31 % (3.76 per household) in 1981.

DIFFERENCES IN THE QUALITY OF DRAUGHT ANIMALS:

We noted not only differences in the number of draught animals between the land-poor and land-rich groups but also significant differences in the quality of the draught animals they possessed. And in a situation where there has been virtually no technological advance, the quality of the draught animals does matter. A pair of strong draught animals can plough land more deeply and more swiftly than a pair of weak draught

animals. We , therefore, asked about the general health of their draught animals. We also observed ourselves. Normally, villagers have their own way of classifying draught animals into 'good','average' or 'bad' categories. The criteria used are usually the general look of the animals—whether skinny/ bony/ very weak to draw ploughs/ light weight/ dwarf size, growth of horns etc. Although they may sound arbitrary and subjective to outsiders, these categories, in fact, represent an ingenious way of rating them.We asked the respondents about the approximate value of their draught animals at current market prices. We also measured the height of each of the draught animals with the help of the scales which we carried with us. A diverse but very intersting picture emerged from our qualitative investigations. The qualitative differences are presented in quantitative terms in table 7.3.

Table 7.3 indicates the following:

i) The average height and price of draught animals were relatively better in village- 1 than in village-2.

ii) Most of the draught animals of better height and value belonged to the richer groups of the peasantry in both villages.

iii) More than 85 % of the draught animals in richer groups (say, groups 7 to 9) were either 'good'or'average'in health terms.By contrast, about 40% of the draught animals of the poorer groups (groups 1 to 3) were 'bad' healthwise. Less than 10 % of their animals could be termed as 'good', while about 40 % of the animals of richer groups belonged to this category. The above findings are more or less true for both villages.

Most poor households could not afford to buy healthy animals and they did not have enough money to buy fodder for their animals. The community grazing grounds for the draught animals have been virtually wiped out in both villages because of the increased pressure on land. By contrast, the richer groups had enough stock of fodder (as exemplified by the enormous size of their kherer pala or pile of fodder) and they had the means to buy it in case of any shortage. The mortality of draught animals was also higher in the poorer groups. So it was not surprising that we observed significant differnces in the qualitative aspects of draught animals among different groups of the peasantry.

TABLE 7.3

DIFFERENCES IN THE QUALITIES OF DRAUGHT ANIMALS: 1981

VILLAGES AND QUALITIES	LAND GROUPS (ACRES)								
	0	.01-.50	.51-1.50	1.51-2.50	2.51-3.50	3.51-5.00	5.01-7.50	7.51-10.00	10.01+
VILLAGE - 1									
A. General Health (in %)									
i) good	9.15	2.44	11.27	15.00	9.44	13.07	27.63	41.21	39.20
ii) Average	48.56	50.43	52.41	62.55	83.02	68.13	65.23	52.15	56.32
iii) Bad	42.29	47.12	36.32	22.45	7.54	18.80	7.13	6.63	4.47
B. Height (in inches)	37.60	38.00	39.00	39.80	41.50	40.80	41.10	40.75	44.20
C. Average price/ draught animal (in taka)	859.00	936.00	915.00	973.91	1030.18	995.20	1037.50	1012.30	1055.10
VILLAGE - 2									
A. GENERAL HEALTH OF DRAUGHT ANIMALS (IN %)									
i) Good	7.65	3.14	8.21	10.27	9.49	10.28	22.62	35.20	38.68
ii) Average	41.26	43.40	44.52	49.25	55.23	50.22	65.76	50.15	55.42
iii) Bad	51.09	53.45	47.27	40.48	64.72	35.28	11.62	14.65	5.90
B. Height (in inches)	32.20	34.25	37.50	36.80	37.50	36.75	38.00	39.60	41.55
C. Average price/ draught animals (in taka)	750.00	820.15	829.27	840.65	849.85	856.75	879.27	890.66	897.28

Lenin, however, used a different method for classification of the peasantry in the context of Russia. He used the number of draught animals owned as the basic reference group while classifying the peasant households (Lenin, 1977a:94). We have used Lenin's method, adding one or two elements to it, while classifying the peasant households in our study villages. Tables 7.4 and 7.5 show in detail the classification of the peasantry in both villages in terms of the ownership of draught animals.

Using ownership size of draught annimals as the basic differentiating variable, we again find (as shown in tables 7.4 and 7.5) acute concentration of draught animals in the hands of a few well-to-do peasants and dispossession of poorer groups of the peasantry. For the sake of comparison, if we categorize households with none or 1 draught animal as poor peasants, with 2 to 3 draught animals as middle peasants and with 4 or more draught animals as well-to-do or rich peasants. We observe a highly differentiated picture in both of our study villages. The extent of differentiation was sharper in village-1.

i) In village-1, the well-to-do peasantry, constituting only 12.00% of households (and 17.81% of total population in the village), held 40.32% of total area under crops in 1981. This group also owned a considerable proportion of total draught animals (43.34%) and total owned cultivable land (41.58%). At the opposite pole, we found the complete dispossession of the bottom group. The poor peasantry, comprising a little more than half of the total households (54%) had only about 1/6 (17.80%) of the total area under crops. This group owned only 1/5 (20.20%) of the total owned cultivable land and only 1/26 (3.80%) of total draught animals.

ii) The differences were more marked in village-2. The rich peasantry comprising about 1/11 (16.31%) of total population, owned little less than half of total land under crops and also total owned cultivable land (42.74%) and 45.70% respectively). They also held about one third of the total draught animals. But, at the other end, the poor peasantry, comprising more than half (53.23%) of total households and 40.71% of total population controlled only 1/11 (9.20%) of total land under crops and owned about 1/9

TABLE 7.4

VILLAGE - 1: CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO THE OWNERSHIP OF DRAUGHT ANIMALS: 1981

GROUPS OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF HH	% OF POPULATION (BOTH SEXES)	AVERAGE AREA UNDER CROPS PER HH (ACRES)	% OF TOTAL AREA UNDER CROPS	% OF HH WITH NO LAND UNDER CROPS	DRAUGHT ANIMALS PER HH (NOS)	% OF TOTAL DRAUGHT ANIMALS	OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND PER HH (ACRES)	% OF TOTAL OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND
With no draught animals	49.00 – 54.00	41.60	.64	15.23 – 17.80	88.24	0	0 – 3.80	.74	18.12 – 20.20
With 1 draught animal	5.00	3.96	1.08	2.57	5.88	1	3.80	.83	2.08
With 2 draught animals	32.50 – 34.00	32.92	2.50	38.88 – 41.88	5.88	2	49.43 – 52.85	2.21	35.90 – 38.22
With 3 draught animals	1.50	3.71	4.17	3.00	-	3	3.42	3.09	2.32
With 4 draught animals	8.50 – 12.00	11.99	4.94	20.13 – 40.32	-	4	25.85 – 43.34	4.69	19.95 – 41.58
With 5 draught animals	3.50	5.82	12.02	20.19	-	6.57	17.49	12.33	21.63
All groups	100.00	100.00	2.08	100.00	-	1.31	100.00	2.00	100.00

TABLE 7.5

VILLAGE - 2: CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO OWNERSHIP OF DRAUGHT ANIMALS: 1981

GROUPS OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF HH	% OF POPULATION (BOTH SEXES)	AVERAGE AREA UNDER CROPS PER HH (ACRES)	% OF TOTAL AREA UNDER CROPS	% OF HH WITH NO LAND UNDER CROPS	DRAUGHT ANIMALS PER HH	% OF TOTAL DRAUGHT ANIMALS	OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND PER HH (ACRES)	% OF TOTAL OWNED CULTIVABLE LAND
With no draught animals	47.10	37.20	.38	7.19	88.23	0	0	2.34	8.30
With 1 draught animal	4.13	3.51	1.23	2.01	2.94	1	2.83	1.34	2.29
With 2 draught animals	25.62	26.82	2.59	26.36	5.88	2	35.03	2.12	22.55
With 3 draught animals	14.05	16.16	3.89	21.70	2.95	3	28.81	3.64	21.16
With 4 draught animals	3.32	3.81	5.23	6.87	0	4	9.04	5.00	6.85
With 5 and more draught animals	5.78	12.50	15.63	35.87	0	6.14	24.29	16.22	38.85
All groups	100.00	100.00	2.52	100.00	100.00	1.46	100.00	2.41	100.00

	51.23			9.20			2.83		10.59
	39.67			48.06			63.84		43.71
	9.10			42.74			33.33		45.70

(10.59%) of the total cultivable land. Their share in the ownership of total draught available was negligible, at only 2.83%.

So, we found a considerable concentration of the crop areas, owned cultivable land and draught animals in the hands of the well-to-do peasants in both villages, using ownership of draught animals as a differentiating variable.

2: Ownership Pattern of Other Animals :

Besides draught animals, a peasant household usually owns one or two calves, sometimes two or more goats and, of course, poultry (ducks and fowls) which yield extra income. Earlier, a milch cow also came under the category of other animals, but these days most of them are used as draught animals, with one or two exceptional cases. As regards poultry, only a few attempts were noted to organise it as a business concern, mostly with the help of the governmental technical advice and credit facilities. The distribution of these other animals was no less unequal in our study villages.

i) In village-1, well-to-do peasants, owning at least 7.50 acres of land and comprising only 7.50% of the total households owned one quarter of total calves, 24% of total goats and 22% of total ducks and fowls. They owned on an average 1.5 calves, 3.5 goats and 15 ducks and fowls per household. In village-2, rich peasants (defined as above) comprising only 6.61% of the total households owned 20% of total calves, 15% of goats and 19% of ducks and fowls. The per household figures were 1.25, 2.50 and 10 respectively in 1981.

ii) By contrast, the poorest section of the peasantry in village-1 (owning no or less than 0.51 acres of land) comprising 41% of total households held only 4.65% of total calves, 21% of goats and 20% of ducks and fowls. The per household figures were 0.04, 0.68 and 2.47 respectively. Corresponding figures for village-2 were even less. Thus, this group comprising 41% of total households held only 12% of calves, 15% of goats and 10% of ducks and fowls. The per household number were 0.18, 1.12 and 3 respectively.

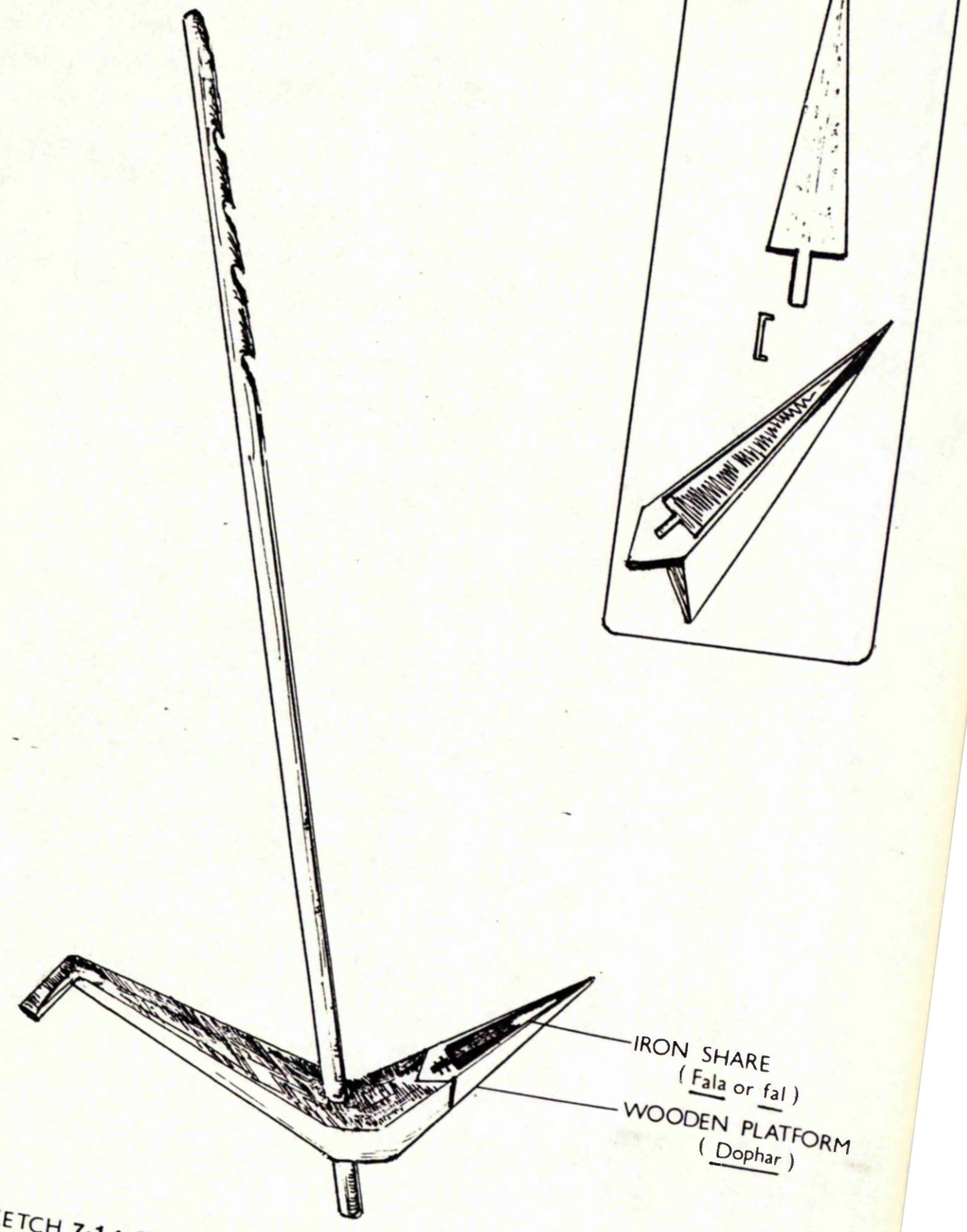
3 : Distribution of Farm Implements and Accessories

Implements and accessories used by the villagers for agricultural production were as yet very old fashioned. They still use the age-old

types of implements well known in the locality for generations. There has been little technological advance in the use of farming implements. Only recenlty, some of the villagers (the majority of them from the richer peasantry) have been using power pumps for irrigation. The use of Deep Tube Wells and Shallow Tube Wells for watering the HYV crops is more frequent in village-1 than in village-2. In fact, none of the households in village-2 had owned any of such mechanical devices for irrigation. But they at times manage to get water from neighbouring villages. We noticed a number of them in village-1. Except for these pumps and some spraying machines for killing insects, the villagers have not seen any other improved variety of farming implements.

Of all the farming tools, the plough is, no doubt, of greatest importance. It is made of wood and furnished with a pointed iron share (known as fala or fal locally). The share is placed on wooden platform called dophar. The sizes of these fala and dophar determine the quality of ploughing [see Sketch 7.1]. If they are not sufficiently long, the penetration will be less deep and the soil preparation will not be satisfactory. The beam which joins the plough and the yoke is usually made of wood, and so too, the yoke. But some poor peasants make it with bamboo as well. Besides the plough, peasants use a number of other ancilliary implements. A moi (or leveller) is used to level the earth just before and after sowing. It consists of a few pieces of bamboo tied to one another to form a narrow and small platform, which is tied to the yoke by two strong ropes. The cultivator stands on the leveller while it is drawn by two draught animals. Cultivators use a small spade called Khurpi for weeding the extra grasses from the crop field. Kastey (sickle) is used to cut the crop plants. Besides these, they also have an axe (kural), a chopper (dao), a water scoop (donga/hossa), a spade (kodal) and a harrow (nangla).

Only a handful of the households in our study villages had bullock or buffalo-drawn carts and most others used slings carrying baskets (bhar) for the purpose of transportation. Similar types of implements were also noted by Mukherjee in the early 1940s (Mukherjee, 1957a: 98-102). This indicates that there has been no change in the technology of farming in these willages.



SKETCH 7.1 : THE PLOUGH AND ITS ACCESSORIES

Our findings suggest that the well-to-do pesantry in both villages were far better supplied with implements (ploughs, levellers, sickles, weeders and power pumps) than the poor and even the middle peasantry. Table 7.6 and 7.7 give us the details for village-1 and vilage-2.

As can be seen in these tables, the richer section of the peasantry held the major portion of these implements. They monopolised the ownership of modern implements (pumps in this case). The average number per household for them was also higher than that owned by poorer groups.

i) In village-1, the top two groups of households (well-to-do peasantry) comprising about $\frac{1}{3}$ (7.50%) of total households owned about one quarter (23.34%) of the total number of ploughs, nearly 1/6 (17.48%) of the levellers, a little more than 1/10 (10.23%) of sickles, 1/6 (17.62%) of the weeders and more than half (55.55%) of the power pumps.

In village-2, this group comprising only about 1/15 (6.46%) of total households owned more than 1/5 (22.83%) of total ploughs a little more than one quarter of total levellers (26.04%), more than 1/5 (21.83%) of total sickles and about 1/5 (20.05%) of total weeders. There was no power pump in this village.

ii) On the other hand, the poorest section (bottom two groups) comprising about 41% of total household in village-1 held only a little more than 1/12 (7.89%) of ploughs,about 1/11 (9.24%) of levellers, $\frac{1}{4}$ (25.12%) of sickles, $\frac{1}{4}$ (25.38%) of weeders and only 1/18 (5.55%) of total improved implements.

In village-2, this section of the peasantry comprising the same proportion of households as in village-1 (41%) possessed a little less than 1/12 (8.69%) of ploughs, 1/8 (12.34%) of levellers, less than $\frac{1}{3}$ (28.44%) of sickles and about $\frac{1}{4}$ (24.99%) of weeders.

The slightly greater shares of sickles and weeders by the poorest groups may be due to the fact that most of the working males of these households worked as wage labourers and they invariably had their own implements, particularly sickles and weeders.

The per capita figures also varied markedly between the top and bottom groups in both the villages.

TABLE 7.6

VILLAGE - 1: PERCENTAGE SHARES OF FARM IMPLEMENTS BY LANDOWNING GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)	All groups
1. % of households	6.00	35.00	18.50	16.50	6.00	7.00	3.50	4.50	3.00	100
2. % of ploughs (langol)	2.63 (.34)	5.26 (.12)	16.44 (.68)	20.39 (.94)	7.24 (.92)	15.13 (1.65)	8.55 (1.86)	13.16 (2.33)	11.18 (2.84)	99.98 (.76)
3. % of Levellers (Moi)	2.52 (.25)	6.72 (.12)	20.17 (.65)	24.37 (.88)	8.40 (.84)	12.60 (1.08)	7.56 (1.29)	10.92 (1.45)	6.72 (1.34)	99.98 (.59)
4. % of sickles (kaste)	4.06 (1.34)	21.06 (1.19)	16.49 (1.76)	16.49 (1.97)	6.09 (2.00)	11.16 (3.15)	5.84 (3.29)	9.65 (4.23)	9.14 (6.00)	99.98 (1.97)
5. % of weaders (Kharpi)	3.88 (1025)	21.50 (1.19)	17.36 (1.18)	16.06 (1.88)	5.18 (1.67)	12.17 (3.36)	6.21 (3.43)	10.10 (4.34)	7.52 (4.84)	99.98 (1.93)
6. % of improved implements (powerpumps)	0 (0)	5.55 (.01)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5.55 (.08)	22.22 (.28)	11.11 (.29)	33.33 (.67)	22.22 (.67)	99.99 (.09)

NOTE: FIGURES IN THE PARENTHESES INDICATE AVERAGE NUMBER OF IMPLEMENTS PER HOUSEHOLD.

TABLE 7.7

VILLAGE - 2: PERCENTAGE SHARES OF FARM IMPLEMENTS BY LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)	All Groups
1. % of households	23.97	17.35	12.40	14.87	11.57	7.44	5.78	1.65	4.96	99.99
2. % of plough (Langol)	3.26 (.10)	5.43 (.24)	10.86 (.66)	19.56 (1.00)	14.13 (1.00)	11.96 (1.22)	11.96 (1.57)	2.17 (1.00)	20.66 (3.16)	99.99 (.76)
3. % of levellers (Moi)	6.17 (.17)	6.17 (.24)	13.58 (.73)	12.22 (1.00)	13.58 (.84)	11.11 (1.00)	11.11 (1.00)	12.46 (1.30)	13.58 (1.83)	99.98 (.67)
4. % of sickles (Kaste)	17.24 (1.00)	11.20 (1.23)	11.63 (1.80)	10.94 (2.05)	11.20 (2.00)	8.62 (2.22)	7.32 (2.42)	7.58 (2.58)	14.25 (5.50)	99.98 (1.92)
5. % of weeders (Kharpi)	14.15 (1.03)	10.84 (1.09)	8.26 (1.73)	14.50 (1.94)	11.79 (1.93)	8.96 (2.11)	9.43 (2.85)	6.83 (3.12)	13.22 (4.66)	99.98 (1.75)
6. % of improved implements (powerpumps)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

NOTE: Figures in the parenthesis indicate average number of implements per household.

The foregoing suggests that the inequality situation was quite significant with respect to the possession of agricultural implements in both villages in 1981. As for the middle groups, they were resisting the pressure imposed on them fiercely in the face of decline in their shares. Their per household shares were also lower than the overall average for the village as a whole and significantly lower than those of the richer groups. Thus the well-to-do peasantry in both villages were seen to be far better endowed with agricultural implements than the poor and even the middle peasantry.

The differences were not only quantitative but also qualitative. The quality of the implements owned by rich groups was superior to that of the poorer groups. To demonstrate this point, we singled out the plough, the most important of all agricultural implements, for investigation.

As mentioned earlier, the quality of a plough actually depends on two of the most important accessories - i) the iron share (fala or fal) and the wooden platform (dophar) on which this share is fixed. Normally, rich peasants change both of these accessories long before they became diminished by constant use so that they remain sufficiently long to penetrate deep into the soil. Thus, rich peasants are in an advantageous position as they are in possession of well-built ploughs with sharp and long shares drawn by strong and healthy draught animals. Therefore, the soils of rich peasants are better ploughed than the landpoor peasantry

Table 7.8 shows us the difference in lengths of the shares (falas) and wooden platforms (dophars) used by different groups of the peasant households.

TABLE 7.8

VILLAGE 1 AND 2: AVERAGE LENGTHS OF THE IRON SHARES (FALAS) AND WOODEN PLATFORMS (DOPHARS) OF DIFFERENT LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)								
	0 (1)	.01-.51 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)
VILLAGE 1:									
1. Average lengths of the iron share (fala) in inches.	8.17	8.31	8.29	8.55	8.67	8.79	9.60	9.56	9.56
2. Average lengths of the wooden platform (dophars) in inches.	12.67	12.86	12.81	13.32	13.17	13.43	14.25	14.50	14.50
VILLAGE 2:									
1. Average lengths of the iron share (fala) in inches.	7.98	8.12	8.10	8.14	8.21	8.26	8.75	9.10	9.22
2. Average lengths of the wooden platform (dophars) In inches.	12.17	12.25	12.22	12.48	12.42	12.70	12.75	12.80	12.82

Table 7.8 indicates significant differences in the quality of the accessories of ploughs. This inferior technology puts the poor peasants into a considerably disadvantageous position as regards soil preparation. But they try to compensate for these disadvantages through heavy labour inputs - their only abundent resource. However, they can not compensate for these disadvantages through this process of putting extra labour for ever. There comes a stage when new technology (in the form of modern irrigation, fertilizer, seeds etc) enters into the village and strengthens the productivity per acre of rich peasants. As we see later in this chaper, it is at this stage that the traditional inverse relationship between farm size and yield per acre breaks down.

4 : FARMING TECHNIQUE :

Concomitant with the differences in the quality and quantity of farming implements, the well-to-do peasantry were seen to be in an advantageous position as regards the nature of farming techniques. They were seen to do their sowing faster and more intensively, they made better use of favourable weather, sowed the seed in more humid and well ploughed soil, weeded and watered crop plants in time and in the right proportions, and reaped the harvest and threshed the grain in proper time.

Differences in these technical advantages are well reflected in table 7.9. We collected such information only from village-1. It is clear from this table that there were significant differences in farming techniques between the better and badly off peasants. Usually, a field in Bangladesh needs at least 4 ploughing before it is finally ready for sowing or transplanting. The poor peasants in village - 1, because of the acute shortage of draught animals, could not always plough so many times. By contrast, the richer peasants ploughed more than five times on an average. Similarly while the bottom 3 groups weeded less than twice per cropping season on an average the last three groups performed well over twice on an average.

Also, more households in the landpoor groups found it extremely difficult to perform many of the agricultural activities such as ploughing sowing, weeding and watering in time. The situation was even worse for the poorer peasantry with respect to the use of modern inputs, such as irrigation and fertilizer. Only about one quarter of households in

TABLE 7.9

VILLAGE - 1: DIFFERENCES IN FARMING TECHNIQUES: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNING GROUPS								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Average number of ploughins per cropping season	2.00	3.96	3.34	4.03	4.40	5.00	5.14	5.00	5.83
2. Average number of weedings per cropping season	1.50	1.90	1.83	1.76	1.90	2.21	2.14	2.50	2.16
3. % of HH in each group who could perform the following activities in proper time:-									
a) Ploughing	50.00	52.50	6.66	72.70	75.00	92.85	100.00	92.30	100.00
b) Sowing	50.00	52.50	50.00	73.33	80.00	75.00	92.30	92.30	100.00
c) Transplanting	33.33	64.28	52.23	73.33	75.00	78.57	85.71	88.88	100.00
d) Weeding	40.60	56.40	64.86	72.72	75.00	85.71	85.71	88.88	100.00
e) Watering	13.33	25.00	30.00	29.72	33.33	71.42	82.42	88.88	100.00
f) Fertilizing	10.00	24.28	30.00	25.80	28.56	71.42	77.77	88.88	100.00
g) Harvesting	33.33	58.33	83.33	80.64	75.00	92.85	85.71	88.88	100.00

this section of the peasantry could water their land in time and apply fertilizer adequately. But almost all of the richer households could perform these activities at the right time and in the right proportion. All of the foregoing favoured them with a better harvest and thus contributed to the tendency which normally causes a breakdown in the inverse relationship.

Before we turn to various aspects of the inverse relationship, especially the circumstances in which it breaks down, let us examine the pattern of distribution of modern inputs.

5. Distribution of Modern Inputs :

The inflow of modern inputs was considerably higher in village-1, and the distribution of these inputs was concentrated in the richer groups of the peasantry.

Table 7.10 and 7.11 give us the detail.

As we can see from table 7.10, the poorest 59.50% of total households (owning less than 1.51 acres of land) in village-1 used only 15.56% of total fertilizer and 20.21% of total insecticides in 1981. They obtained only 9.60% of total institutional credit distributed through different government and voluntary agencies. As against this, the top 11% of households (owning more than 7.50 acres of land) used 46.62% of total fertilizer, 53.06% of toal insecticides and obtained 54.26% of total insecticides and obtained 54.26% of toal institutional credit disbursed in this village . The per household averages were also significantly different. The land-rich peasantry used much higher amounts of fertilizer, insecticides and institutional credit than the poorer groups.

We get a similar picture in village-2 from table 7.11. The bottom 53.72% of households (owning less 1.51 acres of land) used 14.68% of the fertilizer, 3.12% of insecticides and 4.70% of institutional credit. By contrast, the top 6.61% of households (owning more that 7.50 acres of land) used 39.57% of fertilizer, 14.06% of insecticides and 57% of total institutional credit that flowed into this village. The Per household figures, though smaller compared to those of village-1, varied widely in different groups.

TABLE 7.10

VILLAGE - 1: DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF MODERN INPUTS: 1981

LAND OWNING GROUPS	% OF TOTAL HH	CUMULATIVE % OF TOTAL HH	FERTILIZER USED			INSECTICIDES USED			INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT OBTAINED		
			% share	Cumulative % share	Average amount per HH (mds)	% share	Cumulative % share	Average amount per HH (taka)	% share	Cumulative % share	Average amount per HH (taka)
1.	6.00	6.00	1.58	1.58	1.04	1.46	1.46	10.00	.75	.75	83.33
2.	35.00	41.00	2.69	4.27	.30	6.26	7.72	9.68	2.42	3.17	45.71
3.	18.50	59.50	11.29	15.56	2.41	12.49	20.21	27.67	6.43	9.60	229.32
4.	16.50	76.00	17.56	33.12	4.20	18.20	38.41	45.18	14.97	24.57	598.48
5.	6.00	82.00	7.21	40.33	4.75	7.09	45.50	48.33	6.09	30.66	669.58
6.	7.00	89.00	13.04	53.37	7.35	13.67	59.17	60.00	15.06	45.72	1419.64
7.	3.50	92.50	5.79	59.16	6.53	5.13	64.30	80.00	10.99	56.71	2071.42
8.	4.50	97.00	16.46	75.62	14.44	19.09	83.39	173.77	22.73	79.44	3333.33
9.	3.00	100.00	24.37	99.99	32.09	16.60	99.99	226.66	20.54	99.98	4516.66
ALL GROUPS	100.00		99.99		3.94	99.99		41.88	99.98		659.72

NOTE: MD = Maunds (nearly 82 lbs) TAKA = Bangladesh currency = 2.5 pence (app.)
Percentage figures do not always add up to 100.00 because of rounding off error.

TABLE 7.11

VILLAGE - 2: DIFFERENCES IN THE USE OF MODERN INPUTS: 1981

LAND OWNING GROUPS (ACRES)	% OF TOTAL HH	CUMULATIVE % OF HH	FERTILIZER USED			INSECTICIDE USED			INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT OBTAINED		
			% share	Cumulative % share	Average amount per HH (md)	% share	Cumulative % share	Average amount per HH (taka)	% share	Cumulative % share	Average amount per HH (taka)
1.	23.97	23.97	2.60	2.60	.38	0	0	0	.52	.52	25.30
2.	17.35	41.32	4.26	6.86	.85	3.12	3.12	1.90	1.76	2.28	32.33
3.	12.40	53.72	7.82	14.68	1.83	0	3.12	0	4.70	6.98	72.30
4.	14.87	68.59	8.88	23.56	2.08	18.75	21.87	16.00	7.81	14.79	120.72
5.	11.57	80.16	16.70	40.26	3.91	43.75	65.62	31.11	9.76	24.55	252.56
6.	7.44	87.60	10.43	50.69	4.88	12.50	78.12	17.77	6.02	30.57	389.75
7.	5.78	93.38	9.72	60.41	5.85	7.81	85.93	14.28	12.43	43.00	500.81
8.	1.65	95.93	6.40	66.81	13.50	-	85.93	0	6.05	49.05	1017.25
9.	4.96	99.99	33.17	99.98	28.33	14.06	99.99	30.00	50.95	100.00	1519.76
ALL GROUPS	99.99		99.98		3.48	99.99		10.57	100.00		217.95

NOTES: As in table 7.10.

Differences in the supplies of farming implements and the nature of farming techniques plus the skewed distribution of modern inputs amongst different groups of households led to differential impacts on cropping intensities and the level of production - two important elements of inverse relationship.

8.6: BREAKING DOWN OF THE INVERSE RELARIONSHIP

It is more or less established in the literature that poor peasants cultivate more instensively than the rich peasants as they employ their own family labour (up to the period at which its marginal productivity falls to 'o') intenssively on the samll patch of land (Sen, 1962, 1964; Rao, 1967; Patnaik, 1972; Rudra, 1968 etc). However as Roy argues :

> Once traditional patterns of farming are distributed by introduction of new technology, the impact on the the relation between farm size and productivity is not clear on apriori basis (Roy, 1981:212).

Roy, himself, using disaggregated data at the district level for the Punjab in India demonstrates the disappearance of the inverse relationship in the relatively advanced region but its persistence in backward regions (Roy, 1981).

We, too, got an almost similar result when we made an attempt to test the hypothesis concerning an inverse relationship. In village-1, where we noted significant inflow of new technology, the rich peasants were seen to cultivate their land more intensively. So we found higher level of cropping intensities in these groups than in the poorer groups.

But by contrast, in village-2, where the inflow of modern inputs has been minimal, the poorer groups cultivated more intensively. So their cropping intensities were higher than those of larger farmers.

Table 7.12 indicates these difference.

TABLE 7.12

CROPPING INTENSITIES (IN PERCENTAGES)

LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)	CROPPING INTENSITIES (IN %)	
	VILLAGE - 1	VILLAGE - 2
1. 0	169.90	109.81
2. .01-.50	161.56	225.82
3. .51-1.50	165.19	109.07
4. 1.51-2.50	138.49	141.40
5. 2.51-3.50	195.53	141.94
6. 3.51-5.00	137.02	156.89
7. 5.01-7.50	162.02	142.05
8. 7.51-10.00	212.84	115.13
9. 10.01+	179.48	97.52
All groups	170.75	124.75

NOTE: Cropping Intensity represents the ratio between the gross cropped area and the net sown area.

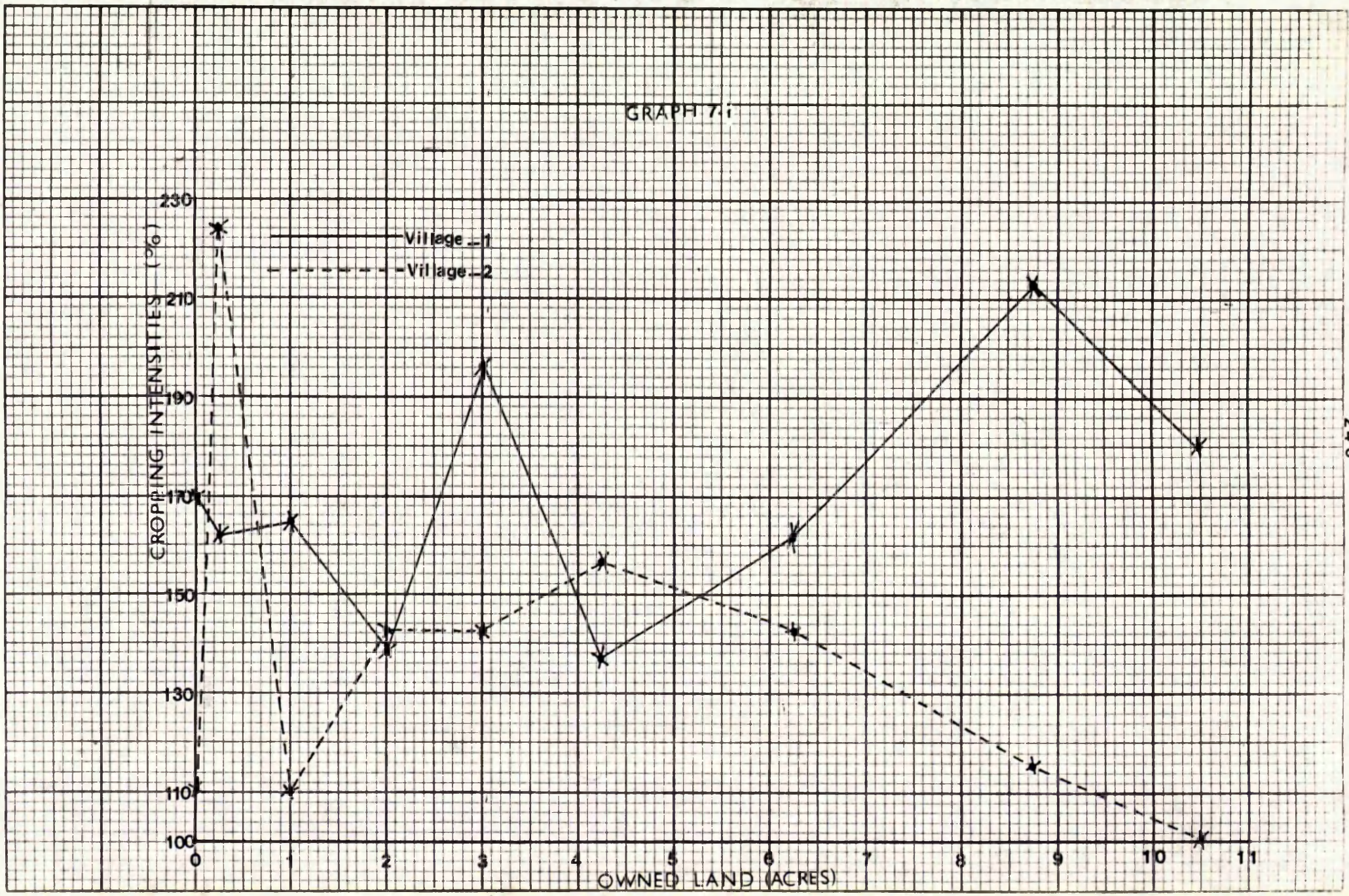

GRAPH 7.1
Village -1
Village -2
CROPPING INTENSITIES (%)
230
210
190
170
150
130
110
100
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
OWNED LAND (ACRES)

Table 7.12 exhibits an inverse relationship for village-2 but a positive relationship for village-1. In village-1, the cropping intensity increases consistently in the richer land groups. But in village-2, the poorer groups were seen to cultivate their small patch of land more carefully and intensively as they had little opportunity to sell their labour to others. The rich peasants on the other hand, in the absence of higher yielding technology, were not very intensive in their farming (see also Graph 7(i)).

The pattern of cropping intensities which we have noticed in the two villages is also supported by the productivity data. We found a inverse relationship still existing between farm size and yield per acre (Gross) in village-2 and this relation just disappearing in village-1. Table 7.13 shows us this relationship.We have taken only the paddy for total agricultural production in table 7.13, because of its overwhelming importance in the production figures. In 1981, it accounted for 90% of total land under crops in village-1 and 94% in village-2. Jute, wheat, potatoes and other vegetables accounted for the rest. In that sense, the proprotion of land under traditional cash crops, like, jute, was very insignificant in our study villages. For that reason we chose to concentrate upon the paddy production.

While calculating yield per acre, we have taken gross acreage and not net acreage. The reason for taking gross acreage was to neutralize the cropping intensity effect from the output figures. If we were to take net acreage, the productivity per acre in village-1 would have looked highly exaggerated from that of village-2, nay the national average. Paddy is produced three times in village-1 and most of it is HYV. Unless we took a gross acreage, the per acre production would have been more than double of the national average (which is near to that of village-2).

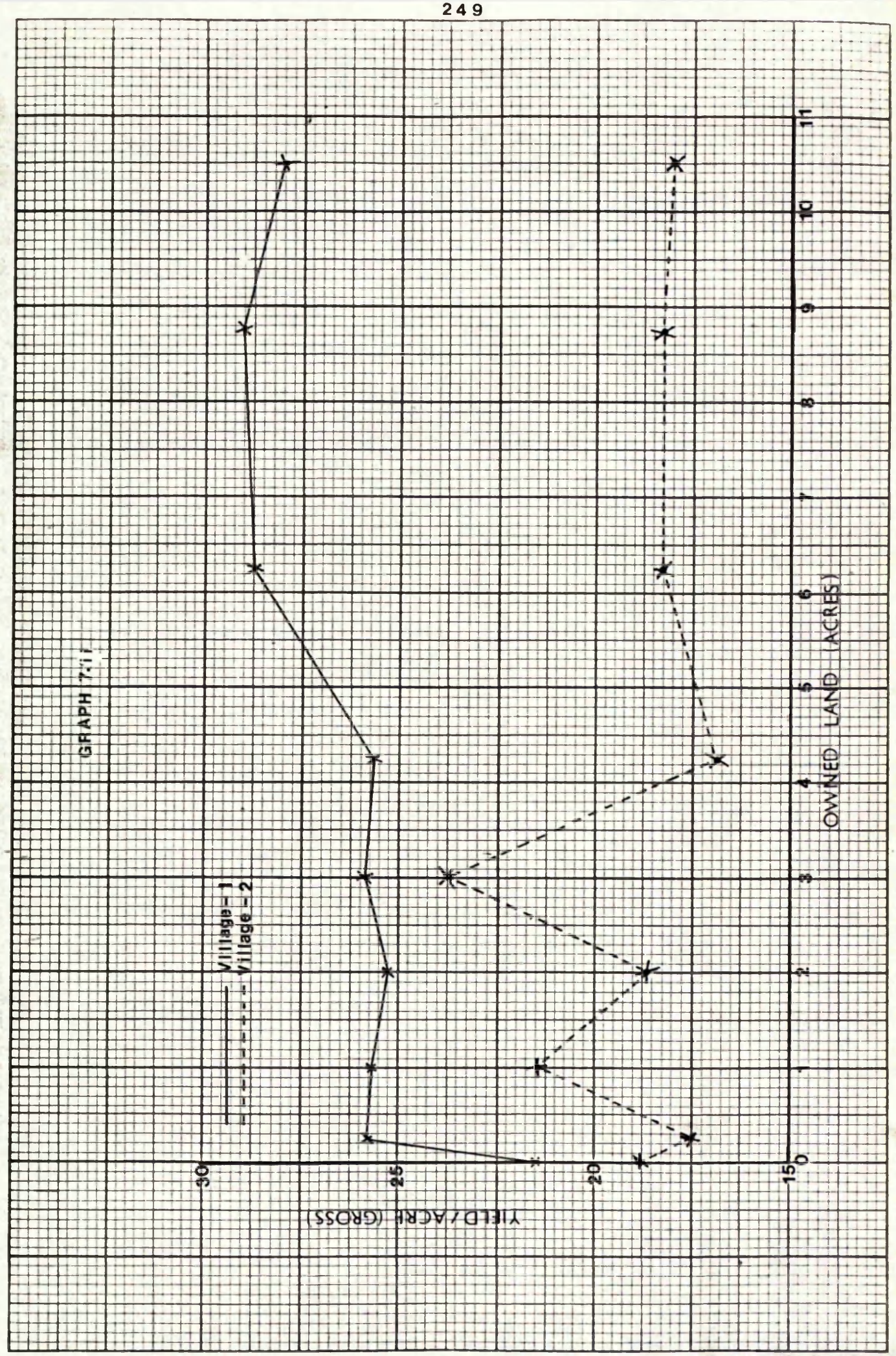
As can be seen, richer groups produced more paddy per acre than the poor ones in village-1. The yield per acre in the poorest two groups together was recorded to be 25 maunds or less. On the other hand, the richest two groups had yields higher than 28 maunds per acre.

When we considered HYV alone, the differences were even more prominent. The poorer groups had an average of 32 maunds per acre while the richer groups had an average yield of 38 maunds per acre.

TABLE 7.13

DIFFERENCES IN PADDY PRODUCTION AND YIELD/ACRE AMOUNGST LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)	All Groups
VILLAGE - 1										
1. % of households	6.00	35.00	18.50	16.50	6.00	7.00	3.50	4.50	3.00	100.00
2. Share in the total production %	1.95	2.28	9.40	14.33	8.42	10.98	9.02	23.04	20.57	99.99
3. Proportion of HYV in the total production %	49.84	78.07	41.95	40.14	35.97	34.01	47.20	49.76	48.27	43.85
4. % share of total HYV production	2.22	3.56	8.99	12.12	6.91	11.76	8.00	26.14	20.29	99.99
5. Yield/gross acres (in maunds)	21.48	25.83	25.73	25.24	25.88	25.81	28.92	28.99	27.98	25.95
VILLAGE - 2										
1. % of Households	23.97	17.35	12.40	14.87	11.57	7.44	5.78	1.65	4.96	99.99
2. % share in the total production	1.66	3.20	5.96	12.37	17.04	13.24	13.04	4.63	28.85	99.99
3. % proportion of HYV in the total production	19.38	0	0	2.01	9.04	1.55	9.67	0	8.44	5.87
4. % share of total HYV production	5.50	0	0	26.25	5.25	21.50	0	0	41.50	100
5. Yield/acres (in maunds)	18.79	17.54	21.49	18.71	23.90	16.90	18.26	18.30	18.09	19.00


GRAPH 7.11
Village-1
Village-2
YIELD/ACRE (GROSS)
30
25
20
15
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
OWNED LAND (ACRES)

In village-2, however, HYV production was minimal. Only 3% of the cropped land was under irrigation. The inverse relationship still existed in this village-2[1] the poor and middle groups of the peasantry as a whole had higher yield per acre than the richest two groups (though the yield per acre for the poorest two groups was still very poor). They had a yield of 20 maunds per acre as against 18.5 maunds per acre for the richest two groups. (See also graph 7 ii)

The reason for the breakdown of the inverse relationship in village-1 was the inflow of modern farming inputs including eighteen mechanical pumps (17 Shallow Tubewells and 1 Deep Tube Well) for irrigation. Irrigation has made farming a profitable concern in this village. As such the richer section of the peasantry were seen to take a keen interest in agricultural activities. They were found to cultivate the land more intensively with the help of the wage labourers. Moreover, as the cost of production went up following the partial withdrawal of government subsidies from fertilizer, insecticides, power pumps and petroleum, and also the rise in the international prices of these inputs, only the richer section of the peasantry had the means to organise their agricultural production system more efficiently. They are the people who can apply more hired labour, and use superior technology in the form of higher doses of water, fertilizer and insecticides at the right time. So it was very likely that the cropping intensities and the output per acre were higher in the richer groups. By contrast, village-2, still a traditional village, demonstrated the normal inverse relationship between productivity and farm size.

Table 7.13 also shows us the differntial pattern of production of paddy. We noted mainly three varieties of paddy - Boro, Aman and Aush in both the village. HYVs were noticed in both Boro and Aman. As expected, the proportion of HYV cultivation was significantly higher in village-1 compared to village-2. About 30% of its total cropped bud was under modern irrigation in 1981.

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[1] The co-efficient of regression was estimated to be -.033 (significant at 5%) but while that for village-1 was positive, + .50 (significant at 5%). The estimated equation ($y = a + bx$) was linear.

The distribution of paddy output among different landowning groups was also found to be unequal. Thus households owning less than 1.51 acres of land (constituting 57.5% of total households) accounted for only 13.63% of paddy production in 1981 in village-1. By contrast, the top two groups (constituting 7.5% of total households) had 43.61% of total production.

The distribution looks even more asymmetrical when we compare the figures of HYV. Thus the bottom 3 groups accounted for only 14.77 of total HYV production, while the top two groups accounted for 46.43%. of the share.

7 : DIFFERENTIAL STAYING POWER :

Not only did the richer households share the major part of total production, but they also took advantage of their better staying power and sold their produce when the price was higher. Poor peasants, most of them in perpetual debt and in need of cash, sold off their produce immediately after the harvest at a lower price. This is clear from table 7.14. It shows the differential market participation by different groups of the peasantry.

TABLE 7.14

MARKET PARTICIPATION BY LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)								
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.00 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)
VILLAGE - 1									
Percentages of households reporting sale of paddy within:-									
1. 15 days of harvest	50.00	44.44	44.00	32.25	63.63	50.00	50.21	23.42	21.12
2. 30 days of harvest	50.00	44.44	48.00	33.00	45.45	71.42	60.21	50.21	25.13
3. 60 days of harvest	0	11.11	8.00	34.50	36.36	50.00	-	24.11	30.12
4. 60-90 days of harvest	0	0	0	0	0	25.57	36.43	33.33	30.00
5. round the year	0	0	0	0	63.63	28.57	90.00	100.00	100.00
VILLAGE - 2									
Percentages of households reporting sale of paddy within:-									
1. 15 days of harvest	100.00	75.00	60.60	40.75	50.00	50.00	25.00	21.00	21.12
2. 30 days of harvest	50.00	50.00	48.00	32.65	46.20	50.00	22.26	20.00	20.00
3. 60-90 days of harvest	0	0	25.25	33.33	50.00	65.20	65.50	50.00	75.00
4. Round the year	0	0	0	0	63.35	76.28	90.00	90.00	100.00

Table 7.14 clearly speaks of the advantageous position of the richer groups in market participation. Most of the bottom groups participated within 15-30 days of the harvest and they could not withhold their sale upto the lean period, when the prices recorded high. On the contrary, richer households could abstain from selling immediately after the harvest when most of the poorer and middle peasantry were selling and glutting the market. The land-rich groups usually sold their products during scarcity period when the price was higher.

While the average selling price for the bottom three groups was recorded roughly around tk. 100/- in village-1 and tk. 96/- in village-2 the corresponding figures for the top two groups were tk. 120/- and tk. 115/- respectively during our study period. Thus, the richer peasantry were in an advantageous position was also confirmed by the pattern of their incomes (both agricultural and non-agricultural). We turn to this in following section.

8: DIFFERENCES IN INCOME :

We observed enormous differences in incomes amongst different groups of the peasantry in both the villages, although the precise degree of these differences varied from village to village. We examined these differences from different angles using different methods of investigation. Firstly, we investigated the differences amongst the landownership groups; and secondly, we grouped the households according to different ranges of income. Table 8.15 gives the distribution of income according to landownership groups.

Table 7.15 shows an asymmetrical pattern of income distribution. In village-1, the bottom two groups (the poorest section of the peasantry) constituting 41% of the total households shared only 14.9% of the total income in 1981. But the top two groups, constituting only 7.5% of the total households (less than 1/5 of the poorest section) shared 34.09% of the total income (which was more than double the share of the poorest

TABLE 7.15

DIFFERENCES IN INCOME AMONGST LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.50-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)	All groups (average)
VILLAGE - 1										
1. % of HH	6.00	35.00	18.50	16.50	6.00	7.00	3.50	4.50	3.00	100.00
2. % of total income	2.97	11.93	11.00	11.20	7.72	12.44	8.65	18.76	15.33	100.00
3. Agricultural income as % of total income	28.22	25.72	68.19	86.42	86.82	89.08	85.69	85.96	82.93	74.42
4. Income per HH (taka)	59.38	40.92	71.42	81.56	15.44	213.23	296.69	500.04	613.01	12003.38
5. Income per capita (taka)	14.25	95.09	13.07	13.39	18.91	27.64	28.84	48.42	63.41	19.76
VILLAGE - 2										
1. % of HH	23.97	17.35	12.40	14.87	11.57	7.44	5.78	1.65	4.96	99.99
2. % of total income	14.97	8.02	6.44	12.44	11.07	7.27	7.22	2.32	30.24	99.99
3. Agricultural income as % of total income	33.84	23.32	33.79	91.85	91.13	88.84	92.81	89.69	86.00	75.60
4. Income per HH (taka)	3900	2885	3245	5219	5974	6103	7789	8763	38082	6243
5. Income per capita	958	638	573	1021	1115	999	1013	1095	3218	1151.36

section). The per household and per capita income figures were also highly unequal. The per household income of the top group (group 9) was at least 10 times higher than that of the bottom group (group 1). In per capita terms, the difference was not that large. It was 4 : 1.

Similarly in village-2, the bottom two groups (41.32% of the total households) held 22.99% of the total income and the top two groups (6.61% of the total households) held 32.56% of the total income. The per household incomes of the two extreme groups (i.e. groups 1 and 9) tk. 3900 tk. 38082 (the ratio being 1 : 10) respectively. In per capita terms, the two figures were tk. 958 and tk. 3218. (the ratio being 2 : 7) respectively. This means that the differences of income in various groups of the peasantry was higher in village-1 compared to that in village-2.

Another interesting trend emerges from this table. Both per capita and perhousehold incomes of group 2 (owning less than .51 acre of land) were less than the corresponding figures for groups (owning no land and mostly earning as wage labourers). This indicates the appalling condition of the poorest section of the peasantry. A majority of these households have already chosen their occupations as agricultural wage labourers, but a significant proportion of them still cling to their tiny patches of land, while some of them rent in land under highly disadvantageous rental conditions. These were the partially dispossessed peasantry. By contrast the fully dispossessed peasantry were earning relatively more than the potential landless group. The per capita incomes of the the poor peasantry owning same land, say upto 2.50 acres of land were less than the landless group (group-1). This underlines one clear fact : that the position of the marginal peasants was truly vulnerable.

Also intersting is the pattern of income that derived from outside farming as such. As we can see from table 7.15, the proportion of income coming from agriculture in groups 1, 2 in village-1 and groups 1, 2 and 3 in village-2 are really very low. The proportions in the middle groups are very high , but again starts falling in the last two groups.

A mjor part of the income which we will call non-agricultural[2] came from agricultural wages. The rest came from rent, small business, raising poultry and livestock. The agricultural wage income accounted for 79.43%, 69.18% and 31.23% of the total income of groups 1, 2 and 3 respectively in village-1. The extent of wage income was quite insignificant in village-2 as the employment opportunities were few in this village (around 40% of the toal income of groups 1, 2 and 3 as on the whole cases from agricultural wages). The middle groups earned only about 12% - 15% of their income from non-agricultural persuits (most of it coming from business and remittance from their families living in town or abroad). The proportions were less than 10% for the middle groups in village-2.

The top-most group had higher proportions of its income earmarked as non-agricultural (17% in village-1 and 14% in village-2). That means that the percentage of non-agricultural income (most of which being cash) increased from the middle groups to the extreme ones. Both these extreme groups sold more of their commodities in the market (for the bottom groups, labour-power itself being the single most important commodity). A higher proportion of non-agricultural income in the top most group indicates the ability of the land rich group to reap the benefits of developmental work, because of their advantageous position in the rural power structure (see also Rahman, 1981; Vylder, 1982).

Now, let us look at the second method of income distribution. We have used here the range of money incomes as the differentiating variable. We have used 12 income ranges for this purpose.

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[2] Lenin never considered agricultural wage as agricultural income. He always categorised it as a sort of 'industry'. Agricultural wage involves purchase and sale of labour power and because of its 'commercial' nature of transanction, Lenin would categorised this form of income as income deriving form 'personalised industries' (Lenin, 1977a: 154).

TABLE 7.16

PATTERN OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION: 1981

PER HH INCOME RANGES (TAKA)	VILLAGE - 1				VILLAGE - 2			
	% of total households	Cumulative % of number of households	% of total income	Cumulative % of total income	% of total households	Cumulative % of number of households	% of total income	Cumulative % of total income
1. Below 2000	3.00	3.00	.40	.40	15.27	15.27	2.73	2.73
2. 2001-3000	9.00	12.00	1.73	2.13	14.67	29.94	4.01	6.74
3. 3001-4000	13.50	25.50	3.87	6.00	6.28	36.22	2.17	8.91
4. 4001-5000	12.50	38.00	4.60	10.60	9.20	45.42	3.51	12.42
5. 5001-6000	9.00	47.00	4.17	14.77	5.52	50.94	4.27	16.69
6. 6001-7500	14.00	61.00	7.45	22.22	16.45	67.39	10.66	27.35
7. 7501-10,000	7.50	68.50	5.00	27.22	9.78	77.17	7.23	34.58
8. 10,001-15,000	11.50	80.00	14.16	41.38	10.20	87.37	12.50	47.08
9. 15,001-20,000	5.00	85.00	7.52	48.90	2.83	90.20	3.38	50.46
10.20,001-30,000	7.50	92.50	14.82	63.72	4.22	94.42	10.66	61.12
11.30,001-50,000	3.00	95.50	10.45	74.17	3.01	97.43	12.64	73.76
12.50,001 and more	4.50	100.00	25.83	100.00	2.56	99.99	26.23	99.99
TOTAL:	100.00		99.99		99.99		99.99	

Table 7.16 also shows an enormous inequality of income in both the villages we studied. Thus, we found 38% of total households in village-1 who had per household income of Tk. 5000/-. But they held only 10.6% of total income of this village in 1981. In village-2, there were 45.42% of households below Tk 5000/- per household income range. They accounted for only 13.74% of the total income of the village.

By contrast, there were only 4.5% of households who had an average income exceeding Tk. 50,000/- per annum in village-1. But they held one-quarter of the total income. Again, there were 13.74% of households in village-2 whose income per household exceeded this range. They accounted for 2.68% of the total income of the village.

The above findings, definitely indicate a high level of income equality in rural Bangladesh. But unfortunately, we do not have exactly similar information for these villages for the early periods. We have, however, made an estimate from Mukherjee's distribution of income (Mukherjee, 1957a, table 3.1:135) for Six Villages of Bengal in 1941-42 (which also included our village-2) by inflating his data with the help of an estimator[3] reflecting the changes in the cost of living indexes, we found that only 4% of the households had an income per household less than Tk. 50,000/- (at 1980-81 prices). That means that a considerable number of households fell from their earlier income ranges and swelled the ranks of the dispossessed. At the other extreme, the proportion of households with average income of more than Tk. 50,000/- (at 1980-81 prices) remained more or less stable over these years, while their share in total income increased over time.

9. DIFFERENCES IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING :

The standard of living depends to a large extent on the material elements of production. So differences in the standard of living in a way reflect the extent of differences in the material condition of production. While investigating differences in standard of living amongst different groups of households we examined the

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[3] After adjusting the price changes and weights in the cost of living indexes, we found that a Tk. in 1941-42 was equivalent to Tk. 65 in 1980-81.

ownership pattern of houses, other assets like radios, torches, cycles, motorcycles etc. and the pattern of expenditure with a special emphasis on the quantity and quality of their food intake.

A : HOUSING :

We noticed, primarily, two types of housing structure in our study villages : a)tin-roofed and b) the straw-thatched huts. The former is an indication of a richer household and the latter a sign of an impo verished household. But a few of the poor households continued to live in tin-roofed huts which they inherited from their parents, despite their economic hardship. These were the people who were highly conscious of their past family status and still referred to themselves as people of 'Uchu bangsa' (high family status). We found considerable differences amongst the tin-roofed huts as well. Only a minority of the tin-roofed huts had pucca or brick-laid foundation (less than 10%). Also, not all of the tin-roofed houses had walls made of tin. Most of the tin-roofed huts in village-2 had earth walls. But in village-1, we found that most of these huts had walls made of tin and wood. Normally there is one bedroom in a hut. But sometimes we found a big hut partitioned to make two living rooms.

In general, a hut is, in fact, a bedroom. The value of an average tin-roofed hut is certainly ten to twelve times the value of a straw-thatched one and the life of the former is not at all comparable with the latter. The poor pesantry, living mostly in straw-thatched huts, need to repair their huts almost every two years and this takes a sizeable sum from their already depleted yearly budget. Hence, their investment in agriculture is diminished. The rich peasantry, on the contrary, need to spend very little on their well-built tin-roofed houses.

From our field investigstion we found that the number of huts per household varied quite significantly from group to group. Also, the number of people living per bedroom always tended to be higher in the poorer land groups - a clear indication of the appalling standard of living of the poor peasantry. Table 7.17 shows the housing conditions for different groups of the peasantry in both villages. The number of huts as presented in this table includes both huts used as bedrooms and huts used as kitchen and drawing rooms (Baithak Khana).

TABLE 7.17

CONDITION OF HOUSING FOR DIFFERENT LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.00+ (9)	All Groups
VILLAGE - 1										
1. % of HH with at least one tin roofed hut	0	1.42	16.21	18.18	58.33	71.43	85.71	100.00	100.00	25.50
2. Number of huts per household	2.09	1.48	2.98	3.88	4.75	6.00	6.72	5.67	6.00	3.17
3.* Number of persons living per hut	3.84	5.67	3.76	2.31	2.27	2.09	2.12	2.21	2.08	3.08
VILLAGE - 2										
1. % of HH with at least one tin roofed hut	.03	14.28	33.33	11.11	76.92	77.77	85.71	100.00	100.00	31.40
2. Number of huts per household	1.31	2.07	2.06	2.22	2.30	2.42	3.50	3.75	4.00	2.62
3* Number of persons living per hut	4.54	4.52	3.74	2.30	2.70	3.92	2.88	3.20	2.09	3.25

* Hut is synonymous with room in the context of rural Bangladesh. 3 persons per room (or hut) is estimated as the minimum level of satisfaction acceptable in present day Bangladesh. (See Dutch Report, 1978:28).

As can be seen in table 7.17, the land rich-groups had a higher number of huts per households. In village-1, the top-most group had six huts on an average compared to only 2.09 in group 1. Group 2 had even less, with only 1.48 per household. In village-2, the differences were slightly less marked but not insignificant in anyway. Each household of the top-most group in village-2 had four units of huts per household on an average, while the bottom-most group had only 1.31 units per household.

The number of persons living per bedroom also varied in both the villages. In village-1, 5.40 persons lived in a bedroom on an average in groups 1 and 2 together - the poorest section of the peasantry. On the other hand, there were 2.21 persons per bedroom in group 8 and 2.09 in group 9. Again, the village-2, the first two groups together housed 4.5 per person per bedroom on an average and the corresponding figures for groups 8 and 9 were 3.20 and 2.09 respectively.

The quality of the houses also varied significantly. In village-1, none of the households of group-1, 1.42% of group 2 and 16.21% of group 3 had atleast 1 unit of their houses tin-roofed.[4] By contrast, 100% in groups 8 and 9 had atleast one tin-roofed unit. In village-2, we got a similar picture. 100% in group 9 and 90% in group 8 had atleast one unit of their house tin roofed. But none in group 1, 1.21% in group 2 and 1.32% in group 3 had atleast one unit. The rest of them had ordinary houses built with straw, bamboo and mud.

Thus we observed a clear differentiation in conditions between the top and bottom groups, both in terms of numbers and the nature of the huts.

B. OWNERSHIP PATTERNS OF OTHER ASSETS :

Not only did the housing structure differ, but so, too, did the ownership pattern of other assets. Of these assets, we specifically enquired about radios. The radio not only helped the rich peasants with greater knowledge and information about new technology but was also seen as a status symbol. Besides radios, we collected information on

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[4] Tin-roofed houses are costly and symbols of higher status in rural Bangladesh.

TABLE 7.18

DIFFERENCES IN OWNERSHIP OF OTHER ASSETS: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)	All Groups
VILLAGE 1										
1. Radio per HH	0	0	.03	.06	.25	.36	.29	.56	.57	.11
2. Bicycles/HH	0	.02	0	.03	.34	.22	.15	.23	.67	.08
3. Torch/HH	0	.03	.11	.13	.34	.43	.58	.89	1.17	.19
4. Motorcycles/HH	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.09	.005
5. Trees/HH	1.25	5.22	9.19	7.43	34.00	14.79	21.67	44.00	77.86	12.90
VILLAGE 2										
1. Radio/HH	.07	.04	.06	.11	.07	.55	.28	1.00	.66	.16
2. Bicycles/HH	.03	.04	0	.16	.07	.44	.71	-	1.00	.17
3. Torch/HH	.13	.38	.26	.11	.53	.88	1.42	1.00	1.66	.45
4. Motorcycles/HH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Trees/HH	1.20	3.50	5.59	6.23	10.28	12.29	15.27	18.50	28.70	7.52

bicycles, torches, motorcycles and trees, to see the tangible indices of differences between the rich and the poor peasantry.

Table 7.18 shows us the differential figures on the average number of these items owned by each group in these villages.

As evidenced from table 7.18 the top group held far more of the assets like radios, cycles, torches and trees than the bottom groups. The rich groups held the major share. This was true for both the villages.

Differences were also observed in the extent and the nature of expenditure which these groups of the peasantry made.

C. DIFFERENCES IN EXPENDITURE :

That the standard of living varied from group to group (of the peasantry) and village to village was reflected in the differences in the extent and the composition of expenditures incurred by these groups of the peasantry. Table 7.19 illustrates how the expenditures of different groups varied.

As indicated in table 7.19, in village-1 the bottom two groups, although constituing almost half of the total households, (41%) shared only 17.44% of the total expenditure. The top two groups, comprising only 7.50% of total households, had almost $\frac{1}{3}$ of the total budget (30.86%). In per household terms, the expenditure of the top most group was nearly 9 times higher than the bottom group. What is more striking is that the per household expenditure of group 2 (the poorest of the peasantry) was found to be less than that of group 1 (composed of mostly wage-earning landless households).

Similarly, in village-2, the bottom two groups constituting 41.32% of the total households held 23.63% of the total expenditure in 1981. At the other extreme, the top two groups, constituting only 6.61% of the total households, shared 21.45% of the total expenditure.

In terms of per household expenditure, the figure of the top group was at least three and a half times higher than that of the botttom group. The absolute figures of different groups were, however, lower in village-2 than the corresponding figures in village-1, indicating a lower development of productive forces in village-2 and hence a lower

TABLE 7.19

DIFFERENCES IN EXPENDITURE: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)									
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)	All Groups
VILLAGE - 1										
1. % of total HH	6.00	35.00	18.50	16.50	6.00	7.00	3.50	4.50	3.00	100.00
2. % share in total expenditure	3.34	14.10	5.24	13.28	10.68	13.80	8.70	16.20	14.66	100.00
3. Average expenditure/HH (taka)	7028.12	5089.39	3573.80	10169.66	22495.12	24894.64	31409.14	45481.44	61672.50	12630.61
VILLAGE - 2										
1. % of total HH	23.97	17.35	12.40	14.87	11.57	7.44	5.78	1.65	4.96	99.99
2. % share in total expenditure	10.75	12.88	10.75	13.21	11.42	9.42	7.18	3.28	18.17	100.00
3. Average expenditure/HH (taka)	3608.58	3831.28	4495.20	4584.61	5095.00	6538.22	6411.71	9624.00	12652.66	5002.28

standard of living. Moreover, the expenditures of the landless groups was also lower than the other groups - as a result of the acute unemployment situation and the lower agricultural wage in this village.

D. Composition of Expenditures :

Not only did the shares of different groups in total expenditure differ but also the composition of the expenditure varied markedly amongst groups. We divided per household expenditure for each group into eight sub-sections : e.g. on food, gifts, festivals, remaining personal consumption (including clothing, medicine, education, housing etc), taxes and dues, uniform (mainly for buying and maintaining implemenents, draught animals and agricultural implements & inputs), litigation and 'others'.

Tables 7.20A and 7.20B present the per centage distribution of expenditure under the above heads.

A number of points emerge from tables 7.20A and 7.20B :

i) Considerable differences in the percentage expenditure on food were observed among different groups of the peasantry in both villages. The percentage figures for group 9 was nearly double that of group 1. A big pecentage of expenditure on food is generally taken to be evidence of a low standard of living as there is little left for other comsumptions. In that sense, the poorest group of households in village-2 had a lower standard of living than the corresponding group in village-1. The richer groups, by contrast, had smaller percentages of their expenditure earmarked for food (top group in village-1 (spent 27.54% and that in village-2 spent 32.57% of their total budget for this purpose).

ii) The percentage of expenditure on farm increased gradually with the increase in the size of land ownership in both villages.

iii) Expenditure on non-productive heads like gifts, festivals, litigation, increased proportionately from smaller to the larger groups in each village.

TABLE 7.20A

VILLAGE - 1: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER HOUSEHOLD: 1981

LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)	On Food	Gifts	Festivals	On remaining personal consumption	Taxes and Dues	On farm	Litigation	Others	Group Total
1.	53.20	.23	2.27	26.33	.09	17.05	.82	0	99.99
2.	63.82	.23	2.40	24.27	.06	9.22	0	0	99.99
3.	46.17	.60	4.72	32.99	.17	12.06	3.03	.26	100.00
4.	53.49	.38	3.10	19.38	.20	22.35	1.09	0	99.99
5.	41.83	.75	2.79	34.38	.19	19.85	.20	0	99.99
6.	42.05	1.69	3.52	21.40	.16	29.88	1.29	0	99.99
7.	40.97	.82	4.00	26.14	.25	25.75	2.04	.02	99.99
8.	35.83	.56	5.08	22.30	.53	32.16	.12	3.42	100.00
9.	27.54	1.49	3.38	22.32	.38	40.99	.52	3.37	99.99
TOTAL (ALL GROUPS)	42.28	.87	3.62	24.40	.35	26.67	.75	1.06	100.00

TABLE 7.20B

VILLAGE - 2: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER HOUSEHOLD: 1981

LANDOWNING GROUPS (ACRES)	On Food	Gifts	Festivals	On remaining personal consumption	Taxes and Dues	On Farm	Litigation	Others	Group Total
1.	66.87	.37	2.08	29.31	0	1.08	.28	0	99.99
2.	64.22	.40	2.06	27.74	.27	4.50	.53	.28	100.00
3.	54.84	.36	1.92	28.08	.27	13.68	.50	.34	99.99
4.	53.77	.43	2.10	27.59	.25	14.92	.46	.48	100.00
5.	49.64	.74	2.47	27.08	.40	18.68	.42	.56	99.99
6.	44.82	1.15	2.62	27.73	.47	21.17	0	2.04	100.00
7.	43.48	.78	2.81	26.69	.64	22.79	1.02	1.78	99.99
8.	39.36	1.19	2.75	27.66	1.13	24.00	0	3.90	99.99
9.	32.57	1.25	5.47	30.26	1.15	24.63	.97	3.69	99.99
TOTAL (ALL GROUPS)	52.30	.67	2.60	28.23	.42	14.01	.67	1.10	100.00

iv) the percentage of expenditure on remaining personal consumption increased from the smaller to the larger land ownershipgroups indicating a relatively higher standard of living for the land-rich groups of the households.

E. THE PATTERN OF FOOD INTAKE :

The richer groups, though they spent less (in percentage terms but not in absolute amount) than the poorer groups on food, were much better off when we considered the extent and quality of food intake.

Tabbles 7.21A and 7.21B show the differences.

TABLE 7.21A

VILLAGE - 1: THE NATURE OF FOOD INTAKE: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)								
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)
1. % of hh who usually took:-									
a) one meal per day	8.33	3.25	2.70	3.03	0	0	0	0	0
b) two meals per day	75.00	90.00	70.27	36.36	26.12	21.42	0	0	0
c) three meals per day	16.66	10.00	27.02	60.60	66.66	78.57	88.80	100.00	100.00
2. % of hh whose menu included (at least once):-									
a) Fish	75.00	95.71	97.29	96.96	100.00	100.00	85.71	88.88	100.00
b) Meat	25.00	22.85	54.05	60.61	75.00	71.42	85.71	88.88	100.00
c) Chicken	0	5.71	5.40	12.12	33.33	35.71	42.85	44.44	33.33
d) Dal (pulse)	50.00	64.28	91.89	90.91	100.00	100.00	85.71	100.00	100.00
e) vegetables	100.00	98.57	100.00	93.94	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
f) milk	16.66	37.14	67.57	81.82	83.33	100:00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3. % of hh reported to have missed at least one meal regularly	75.00	87.14	59.46	27.27	8.33	-	-	-	-
4. % of hh reported to have been half fed for:-									
a) 1 month during last year	0	2.86	13.51	12.12	2.00	-	-	-	-
b) 2 months during last year	0	12.86	16.22	6.06	33.33	-	-	-	-
c) 3 months during last year	33.33	30.00	18.92	9.09	16.66	7.14	-	-	-
d) 4-6 months during last year	33.33	35.71	21.62	9.09	-	-	-	-	-
e) 7-12 months during last year	8.33	8.57	2.70	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. % of hh who reported to have taken 'roti'	58.33	82.86	70.27	45.45	25.00	35.00	-	-	-

TABLE 7.21B

VILLAGE - 2: THE NATURE OF FOOD INTAKE: 1981

ITEMS	LANDOWNERSHIP GROUPS (ACRES)								
	0 (1)	.01-.50 (2)	.51-1.50 (3)	1.51-2.50 (4)	2.51-3.50 (5)	3.51-5.00 (6)	5.01-7.50 (7)	7.51-10.00 (8)	10.01+ (9)
1. % of hh who usually took:-									
a) one meal per day	10.25	6.89	2.71	-	-	-	-	-	-
b) two meals per day	61.37	62.61	26.67	27.77	21.40	-	-	-	-
c) three meals per day	22.46	30.50	58.63	66.67	73.33	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2. % of hh whose menu included (at least once):-									
a) Fish	86.20	87.50	85.71	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
b) Meat	20.68	23.80	6.66	22.22	7.14	22.22	28.57	50.00	66.66
c) Chicken	0	4.76	6.89	5.55	7.14	13.33	11.11	42.85	50.00
d) Dal (pulse)	68.96	42.86	53.33	83.33	78.57	66.66	100.00	100.00	100.00
e) Vegetables	96.55	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
f) milk	7.12	6.89	13.13	31.03	38.09	53.33	66.66	100.00	100.00
3. % of hh reported to have missed at least one meal regularly	37.93	38.09	40.00	11.11	-	-	-	-	-
4. % of hh reported to have been half fed for:-									
a) 1 month during last year	20.68	9.52	20.00	11.11	-	-	-	-	-
b) 2 months during last year	20.68	19.04	13.33	11.11	-	-	-	-	-
c) 3 months duringlast year	3.44	23.80	26.66	11.11	-	-	-	-	-
d) 4-6 months during last year	31.03	14.28	13.33	5.55	-	-	-	-	-
e) 7-12 months during last year	8.77	2.70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. % of hh who reported to have taken 'roti'	41.37	38.09	26.67	44.44	-	-	-	-	-

We see from tables 8.21A and 8.21B that the differences in food consumption varied markedly in both the villages. We can summarize the findings as follows :

i) Most households in the poorer groups could not afford to take three meals a day. Only 16.66% of group-1 and 10.00% of group-2 in village-1 had three meals a day in th the year 1980-81. The corresponding figures for the other village were 24.46% and 30.50%.

ii) 100% of the households in groups 8 and 9 in both the villages could afford three full meals per day.

iii) 75% of households in group 1 and 87.14% of group 2 in village-1 reported that they missed atleast one meal regularly during the year preceding our period of investigation. The corresponding figures for village-2 were 37.93 and 38.09%.

iv) A sizeable section of households in the land-rich groups of both villages reported that they were half-fed during the year preceding the date of interview.

v) The types of food taken often indicates the nutritional content of the food. Thus, milk, meat, chicken are usually considered as the most nutritional food in Bangladesh villages. Our field investigations showed that only a small proportion of the households from the bottom groups could afford to take these foods. On the other end, most rich peasants consumed them almost regularly.

vi) Eating baked course flour ('rooti') is still looked down as poor man's activity, irrespective of its calorie value. More than half of the poorer households (Groups 1 - 3) took 'rooti' instead of rice (the staple food in Bangladesh). None of the rich peasantry took rooti as such.

Thus the level and the quality of food consumption clearly differed from group to group in both villages. These differences had far-reaching consequences for the general health and the standard of living of the households in different land onwership groups. From our

participant observation for about a year in these villages, we could clearly identify the well-fed richer peasantry and the undernourished poorer peasantry. The richer ones were generally fair looking, had softer and oily skin and rounded limbs - a reflection of more assured and contended living. The poorer peasantry on the contrary were bent looking, short, skeletal and sunburned - a reflection of their hard and insecure economic position. Most of them had diseases like night blindness, tuberculosis, gastric ulcers, diarrhoea - the diseases mostly associated with malnutrition . These differential implications for the development of productive forces in these villages.

CONCLUSION :

Thus, from the above findings on the material elements of production, the following clear inferences may be drawn :

i) There is a strong correlation between land ownership and ownership of all other elements of production.

ii) Ownership of these material elements of production are concentrated in the hands of a few.

iii) More and more households are becoming impoverished.

iv) The differences between the poorer groups and the middle groups have been narrowing over time and the indices of economic strength in the top groups show an increase.

v) The standard of living varied markedly between poor and rich groups.

vi) That is, a distinct process of differentiation of the rural households into propertied and propertyless, into better off and worse off, had set in in our study villages.

CHAPTER VIII

WHY DIFFERENTIATION: THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF PRODUCTION AND EXCHANGE

While examining the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the material elements of production possessed by different groups of the peasantry in both of our study villages, we noticed enormous differences between them (see Chapter VI and VII). In fact, we noticed that a clear process of differentiation of the rural households into owners and non-owners had already set in. But measuring these differences alone, though quite significant in itself, does not lead us far enough, and needs to be combined with an attempt at explanation of the observed phenomena. In other words, we must be concerned with the processes which cause, intensify, and often retard these differences.

In an attempt to explain these processes, we have taken the social relations of production and exchange (i.e. the specific relations people enter into with one another in the course of production, distribution and exchange) as the crucial explanatory variables. As part of that attempt we have already delineated the pattern of distribution of the means of production and other related assets in the previous two chapters. In addition to these, we need to look into two other related aspects - (a) appropriation of surplus value and (b) utilization of surplus value[1]. In more concrete terms, it is this surplus value which is generated when people enter into economic and social relations, and causes social stratification into various classes, with distinct and usually contradictory interests.

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[1] Surplus has been taken here as the difference between current output and necessary product (Marx, 1967, Vol. I, 171). The necessary product is equivalent to the amount required for reproduction of labour power, keeping in mind the existing social norms.

In this chapter, we will consider, primarily, the social relations of production and exchange governing the principal object of production - the land-in the context of our study villages. This is to reveal the nature of surplus appropriation and utilisation. More precisely, we will examine the following aspects:

(i) The occupational pattern of rural households.

(ii) Changes in the tenancy situation over time: focussing primarily on the share cropping system of cultivation.

(iii) The mortgaging system and money-lending.

(iv) The process of commoditization, including the purchase and sale of land and other products. The nature of the sale of labour power (an important commodity) will be discussed in Chapter IX.

(v) The pattern of utilisation of surplus: productive versus non-productive use of it.

While discussing the above issues, we will always try to concentrate on the relations between different groups of the peasantry. In particular, relations between the poorer and the richer groups will be analysed to discover what has been happening to their indices of economic strength[2].

1. Occupational Pattern:

In 1980-81, most of the households we studied lived on agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural wage labourers.

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2 More precisely we will see if the changes in the indices of economic strength have been positive (manifested through enlargement of holdings, repossession of operational land from tenants, increase in the ownership of assets etc.) or negative (reflected through squeezing of holdings, dispossession of assets, leasing out of land, selling of labour etc.).

Thus in village 1, 57% of the households reported that their principal occupation was agriculture and 35% of the households had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation. Combining these two, we find that 92% of the total households were primarily involved in agricultural activities, either as farmers or as wage labourers. In village 2, similarly, 56% of the households had cultivation as the principal occupation and 21% of the households had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation. This means that 76% of the households were primarily involved in the agricultural sector. And if we add to this, the secondary occupations of some of the other households, the involvement of households in agriculture in percentage terms would go up by more than 90%. Within this dominance of agriculture, households with larger landholdings controlled more than half of the total land in both villages[3] and appropriated the lion's share of the surplus generated in agriculture. Further, the richer households held the commanding positions and thereby controlled most of the surplus created in the trading and other non-agricultural activities[4].

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3 By larger landholdings we generally refer here to those holdings which are more than 7.5 acres. As we have seen in Chapter VI (tables 6·2A & 6·2B), 11% of total households in village 1 and 12.39% in village 2 owned more than 7.5 acres of land and held 50.49% and 58.58% of owned land respectively in 1981.

4 Vylder also noted similar trends of surplus appropriation. He noted a greater fusion of rural and urban interests:

> Thus what is significant is not so much the expected fact that the class origins of the political elite in Bangladesh are mainly in the rural and urban elites, but the economic and political fusion of rural and urban interests. More and more sons of big farmers tend to engage in business and in urban professional and political activities in general..... (Vylder, 1982: 27).

2. Tenancy Relations:

It is very difficult to get accurate information about tenancy. The landlords tend to underreport the amount of land rented out to others declaring some of the rented land as land under their own cultivation while tenants sometimes claim rented-in land as their own. The reasons for such underreporting may derive from the fear that the rich have of tenancy rights. Rich peasants are apprehensive that the government may confer on tenants the permanent right of cultivation of their rented-out land. Tenants, for their part, do not want to arouse suspicion in the minds of the landlords and do not like to reveal the truth. As such, there are some discrepancies between the findings of government sponsored studies and independent village studies organised by 'autonomous' research organisations. We were aware of these problems and tried to minimise the under/over estimation as much as possible through various cross-checking methods. We think the information on tenancy which we collected for this period may be more reliable than that of the past, since respondents had to depend on memory in order to reconstruct the past.

2(a) Types of Tenancy:

Our field investigation reveals four types of tenancy arrangement which have been commonly in practice for the last three or four decades in our study villages: (i) share-cropping - under which actual produce and, in some cases, certain inputs are shared by the landlord and tenant at fixed proportions; (ii) fixed-rent tenancy - under which the tenant pays the land owner a fixed amount of rent in cash or in kind at the beginning of the season or after harvest irrespective of the output he produces on the land; (iii) khai-khalashi - which is more of a mortgage than a tenancy. Under this arrangement the tenant pays rent to the landlower in advance and enjoys rights of cultivation on the land for a specified number of years after which the land has to be returned to the owner; (iv) dai-sudi - under which the tenant gives a loan to the landowner against a mortgage of land which he can cultivate until the loan is repaid. The net income from the land is thus the interest on the loan. In many cases, the landowner does not hand over the land to the creditors but instead works as a share-cropper on his own land. In this credit

arrangement, the mortgagee value does not reduce and the mortgage can regain possession only by repaying the entire amount, sometimes with interest.

Fixed-rent tenancy has been declared illegal by the 1950 Tenancy Act but is still found in many areas of Bangladesh. It has been a common practice of absentee landlords in the past but these days, with the growth of commercialization and modernisation in agriculture many richer peasants are trying to lease in some land from others, particularly from the poorer peasantry under a fixed rent system. However, as we shall see, share-cropping is still the single most important tenancy arrangement in the country, though the proportion of fixed-renting is on the increase.

2(b) Extent of Tenancy:

The proportion of agricultural land under tenancy (all four types mentioned above) has been declining over the last two decades with the advent of the 'green revolution'. Before the 1950s, tenancy relations, especially the share-cropping system, were the predominant production relations in rural Bangladesh. Mukherjee's study of Six Villages of Bengal in the early 1940s (including one of our study villages) reveals that a major proportion of the cultivators were share-croppers. According to Mukherjee:

> In 1942 it was found that in the interior village, 92 out of 146 cultivators (or 63 per cent of the total) were share-croppers, and 120 acres out of the total cultivated holdings of 640 acres (or 18.8 per cent) were share-cropped. At Silimpur, in the same year 41 out of 63 cultivators (or 65.1 per cent) were share-croppers, and 75 acres out of 250 acres of cultivated holdings (or 30.0 per cent) were share-cropped. Thus taking the six villages together it is seen that 63.6 per cent of the total number of cultivators were share-croppers and 21.9 per cent of the total cultivated area was share-cropped (Mukherjee, 1957a: 86).

But immediately after the partition of India in 1947, there was great confusion in the land system on both sides of the border. Many landlords emigrated from our study areas, and those who decided to stay behind ejected their former tenants, at least temporarily, to evade clauses of the 1950 Tenancy Act. Hence we find a smaller proportion of land under tenancy in the early 1950s. As things stabilized, rich landowners went back to the tenancy arrangements. But again, as more modern inputs (mostly subsidised) began to flow into the rural areas from the mid-sixties onwards, richer landowners began taking back rented out land from their tenants. These, at least, were the trends which we observed in our study villages. Table 8.1 shows us the proportions of agricultural and operated land rented in at different periods.

TABLE 8.1

EXTENT OF TENANCY (RENTED IN) : 1951-1981

Items	1951	1972	1981
1. Total land rented in as % age of Total owned cultivable land:			
i) Village - 1	14.80	15.22	13.00
ii) Village - 2	5.84	17.20	12.78
2. Total land rented in as % age of Total operated land:			
i) Village - 1	14.04	14.55	12.40
ii) Village - 2	5.23	15.46	12.13

Thus, from Table 8.1 we find that the proportion of land rented in (expressed as a percentage of total owned cultivable land and total operated land) declined after 1972 in both the villages and the rate of this decline has been highest in village 1.

These proportions have been calculated on the basis of the amount of land rented in. This does not, however, give the whole picture. We need to look at the other side of the coin as well - that is, what happened to the proportion of land rented out. This will give us the rentiers' point of view. Table 8.2 shows us this view of tenancy.

TABLE 8.2

EXTENT OF TENANCY (RENTED OUT) : 1951-1981

Items	1951	1972	1981
1. Total land rented out as % age of Total owned cultivable land:			
i) Village - 1	19.76	9.60	8.03
ii) Village - 2	15.29	10.81	5.93
2. Total land rented out as % age of Total operated land:			
i) Village - 1	21.69	9.18	7.66
ii) Village - 2	17.21	11.16	5.67

Thus from the rentiers' point of view, we find that the total land rented out, as a percentage, of the total owned cultivable land and operated land, has been on the decline consistently over time, indicating the resumption of operated land by the former landlords of the total rented in land, the major part was reported to be under a share cropping arrangement.

TABLE 8.3

DISTRIBUTION OF RENTED IN LAND: 1951-1981

Items	1951	1972	1981
1. Percentage of total rented in land under share cropping system:			
i) Village - 1	51.24	83.10	81.65
ii) Village - 2	69.72	67.43	72.73
2. Percentage of total rented in land under fixed rent system:			
i) Village - 1	0	9.92	17.86
ii) Village - 2	2.10	4.90	7.38
3. Percentage of total rented in land under other tenancy systems:			
i) Village - 1	48.76	6.97	.48
ii) Village - 2	28.18	27.66	19.89

Table 8.3 shows that of the total rented in land cultivated by the residents of village 1 in 1981, 81.65% was cultivated under share-cropping arrangements. The corresponding figure in village 2 was 72.73%[5]. These figures are slightly less than 1972 figures for

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5. The Land Occupancy Survey, 1977 found 92% of the rented in land in the whole country under share cropping arrangements. This seems somewhat inflated compared to our findings and those of other micro studies A 1980 study of three villages (see CSS Report, 1980), in the southern district of Bangladesh noted the figure as 83.7% and in yet another study of Comilla village, the figure was 76. (Hossain, 1981: 31).

village - 1. In village - 2, the 1981 figure is more than that in 1972. Figures of 1951 for both the villages were less than those of 1981. This is because more land was under mortgage in the past since usurious capital played a more significant role at that time. The predominance of this type of tenancy arrangement has dropped significantly in village 1 over the last 30 years, particularly during the last decade, but it still persists in village 2.

However, the proportion of land under the fixed rent system increased in both villages, the extent of increase being higher in village 1. In village 1, land under fixed rent accounted for 9.92% in 1972 and the figure had almost doubled by 1981 (17.86%). Compared to village 1, the proportions under fixed rent tenancy for both 1972 and 1981 were significantly less in village 2. The higher proportions of land under fixed-rent tenancy in village 1 are directly related to the fact that a number of irrigation pumps have been sunk in this village. With a higher extent of modern irrigation and commercialisation, the proportion of sharecroppers fall[6] on the one hand and on the other a number of poor peasants with less than acre of land and few agricultural implements, consider it better to rent out the land to the middle and rich peasantry and resort to hiring themselves out as wage labourers. Moreover, many of land owners prefer to go for a short term cash tenancy arrangement rather than share-cropping as there is a threat that the government might give occupancy rights to sharecroppers.

The area under tenancy, as indicated in previous paragraphs, does not always correspond to the proportion of households dependent on tenancy. An analysis of categories of farm makes this clearer. Table 8.4 shows four categories of farmers engaged in farming. Groups 1 and 2 together form the owner categories and groups 3 and 4 constitute the tenant categories.

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[6] See also Jansen, 1979: 76-77

TABLE 8.4

CATEGORIES OF FARMS : 1951-1981

FARM CATEGORIES	PERCENTAGES OF FARMS		
	1951	1972	1981
VILLAGE - 1			
1. Rentier-Owner	28.45	24.15	24.69
2. Pure Owner	24.40	33.92	35.44
3. Tenant Owner	47.15	40.00	33.54
4. Pure Tenants	0	1.93	6.33
VILLAGE - 2			
1. Rentier-Owner	32.84	21.45	10.31
2. Pure Owner	34.00	31.42	57.73
3. Tenant Owner	30.04	45.71	24.74
4. Pure Tenants	2.12	1.42	7.22

Note: (1) A rentier-owner may rent out all or part of his land to others.

(2) A pure owner does not rent in/or out any land from others.

(3) A tenant owner owns some land and rents in some more land to make his farm economically viable.

(4) A pure tenant does not own any land and all of his operated land is rented in from others.

As can be seen in table 8.4, the proportion of owner categories has been on the increase over time and that of the tenant categories (taken together) has been on the decline. But, the proportion of pure tenants has been on the increase, and especially during the last decade or so, the increase has been very significant. Thus in both the villages, the proportion of the total number of farms which were pure tenants has almost trebled since 1972. Compared to other categories, however, the proportion of pure tenants was still very small. Simultaneously, the proportion of owner-cum-tenants has been declining. An increase in the proportion of pure tenants combined with a consistent decline in the proportion of owner-tenants and an increase in the number of pure owners, indicates that land has been alienated from the land-poor groups to land-rich groups of the peasantry.[7]

Since land is not normally rented out to non-cultivating households, the increase in the proportion of pure tenants can only imply that some of the small owners and owner-cum-tenants sold off their land to become pure tenants and agricultural labourers. It may also be true that some of them have leased in part or in full the land they had sold off. The decline in the proportion of owner-cum-tenants may also be due to the fact that land-rich groups have reclaimed some of their rented-out land. This has then been cultivated under their own supervision with the help of the wage labourers. The increase in the volume of operated land belonging to the top 10% of households (see table in chapter VI) during the last decade only confirms the above hypothesis.

One more fact needs to be recognised. We have observed in village 1 that as many as 29 near landless households (owning less than 1.50 acres of land) rented out their small piece of land to the richer households and hired themselves out as wage labourers. This means that in recent times, following the inflow of modern inputs into the villages, medium and larger farmers have begun to rent in a large proportion of land. Their aim in so doing has been to realize commercial profit.

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[7] Many macro studies also support these trends (see Chapter IV for detail).

TABLE 8.5

RENTING IN/OUT OF LAND : 1972-1981

Landownership Groups	% of hh (Group -wise) renting in some land		% of hh (groupwise) renting out some land	
	1972	1981	1972	1981
VILLAGE - 1				
1. Less than 2.50 acres	16.38	16.44	6.03	10.52
2. 2.51 - 5.00 acres	25.00	38.46	19.23	15.38
3. 5.01 - 7.50 acres	0	0	42.85	14.28
4. 7.51 and above	7.14	13.33	60.00	36.66
VILLAGE - 2				
1. Less than 2.50 acres	13.81	51.21	9.09	10.34
2. 2.51 - 5.00 acres	33.33	39.13	28.57	23.80
3. 5.01 - 7.50 acres	0	0	57.14	14.28
4. 7.51 and above	0	12.50	100.00	62.50

Table 8.5 reveals that although a sizeable proportion of the poorer households continue to rent in land from others, the richer households are increasingly doing the same. Thus 13.33% of the households of the top two groups (owning more than 7.50 acres) in village 1, 12.50% in village 2 rented in some land in 1981. These proportions are much higher than those of 1972. Similarly, the proportions of households renting out land in the poorer groups (owning less than 2.50 acres) increased in both the villages over the period 1972-81. The proportion of households renting out some land in the top two groups declined in villages 1 and 2.

It is not only the poorer households which have been facing stiffer competition in the land rental market from the richer households. For tenants in general, the terms of the share cropping system have also been deteriorating. Since share croppers constitute

the major portion of tenants, the following sections concentrates on the background of the share croppers, and the terms of share cropping.

3. The Share-Croppers : Family History and Tenency Relations

After identifying the share cropper households (pure tenants and tenant-owner), we investigated their family history. In village 1, we collected information on 53 share croppers. 19 of them (35%) reported that they had become share croppers only within the last year. Of these 19, 14 came from the lowest three land groups. 7 of these 14 said that they were share cropping land which had belonged to them the previous year but had been sold to richer households due to economic pressure. Two of the households with more than five acres of land had become share croppers over the last year purely because of their profit motive. Six of the share-croppers reported that they had been share-cropping for more than ten years and none of them belonged to richer groups.

This means the richer groups have joined the rental market only recently. 33.96% of the share-croppers in village 1 reported that their fathers had been share-croppers and only 9.43% of them said that their grandfathers had been share-croppers. All of these three generation share croppers were from the poorer groups. 69.81% of them reported that they rented in land from the richer households, 22.64% from the middle groups and only 7.55% from the poorer groups. Only the richer and middle households rented in land from the poorer groups.

In village 2, we interviewed 25 share-croppers and found that most of the share-croppers had quite a long history of sharecropping. Only 12% reported that they became share-croppers during the year before the time of interview and, as expected, all of them belonged to the bottom three groups. 28% had been involved in share-cropping for more than ten years and 56% of them had been share-croppers for at least five years. The fathers of 32% and the grandfathers of 8% of the share-croppers had also been share-croppers.

There was only one share-cropper whose landownership exceeded five acres. This suggests that share-cropping has not yet become a commercial venture in this village as it has hardly experienced any developmental efforts in terms of modernisation of agriculture. 64% of the share croppers reported that they rented in land from the richer groups and only 12.34% of them reported having got land from the poor peasants.

Thus in both villages we found that land-poor households were generally share-croppers and mostly cultivated land rented in form the richer households. Very recently some medium and larger farmes have been entering the land rental market. A few of the poorer households have been renting out their small piece of land and moving into the labour market. However, the class background of the share-croppers varied between villages depending on the level of development of the productive forces.

4. Terms of Share-Cropping:

We found no written contract for share-cropping in any of our study villages. We also observed that terms of share-cropping are becoming harsher day by day as more and more households, including some of the richer ones are turning to this form of tenancy. In particular, the return from HYV cultivation being higher than the ordinary kind, more rentier households are being induced to recover their erstwhile rented-out land. In recent times therefore, many tenants have been evicted. In other words, competition for share-cropping has become more severe over the last few years. As a result, the terms of share-cropping have also deteriorated over time. Even in the early seventies, almost all landowners would at least share the inputs half and half with share-croppers and in the fifties and early sixties most landowners supplied at least all of the seeds to the tenants. Even at present, some landowners continue to supply the seeds in full but the proportion is very small. Nevertheless, they dictate the pattern of cultivation (which variety to produce, when to harvest etc) to share-croppers.

In village 1, only 9.43% of the share croppers reported that the landowners paid in full the cost of seed, fertilizer, water and insecticides and shared the product and by-products equally. The corresponding figure for village 2 was 14.81%. 30.19% of the share-croppers in village 1 and 44.44% in village 2 reported that they shared the inputs and outputs half and half with the landowners. 60.38% of the share croppers in village 1 and 40.74% in village 2 claimed that they had to bear the full cost of the inputs but the produce and the by-products were equally divided between land-owner and share-cropper. In at least 3 cases in village 2, share-croppers reported that they received 40% of the share instead of half. This is because of the overcrowding of the share-croppers. The majority of share-croppers with smaller areas of land were forced to accept worse terms than their counterparts with greater areas. Thus, of the share croppers who had to bear the full cost of cultivation, more than 70% belonged to those poorer groups who owned less than 2.50 acres. Land-rich share-croppers got better terms such as full/half payment of the cost of inputs.

Besides sharing the cost of inputs, there were many other conditions which appeared to be disadvantageous for the share-croppers who were small landowners. Almost all share-croppers still shared the actual produce except in one or two cases where they had to pay the value of the share in cash to the landowners.

In village 1, only 47.13% of the share-croppers thought that the land they rented in was fertile. Only 50% of share-croppers from the bottom three groups (owning less than 2.5 acres or no land) said that they rented in fertile land, while all of the share-croppers from richer groups (owning 5.00 acres of land or more) said that they rented in fertile land. About 21% of share croppers from the poorer groups complained that their rented-in land was less productive and needed more labour for cultivation. But the richer share-croppers made no such complaint.

In village 2, 70.83% of all share-croppers thought that they were operating fertile land. However, only about 50% of those who came from the poorer groups thought they rented in fertile land and 27% of them thought they were given less productive land by the landowners. This land needed more labour than usual for cultivation. This was further confirmed when 75% of the share-croppers in village 1 and 60% in village 2 reported that they were chosen as share croppers because they were physically stronger and could put in more labour in the land than others. Only 13% of the share-croppers in village 1 and 27% in village 2 thought that they were chosen as share-croppers because they happened to be near relatives of the landowners. 11.7% in village 1 and 12.5% in village 2 thought that they were chosen as share-croppers because they never defied the instructions of the landowners. These instructions were related to techniques of production, the terms of share and also factional and political support.

Even a decade ago, in most cases the produce was divided in the field and the share croppers did not have to carry the landonwer's share to his house. But at present the share-cropper has to transport the landowner's share from the field to the latter's house. In village 1 only one share-cropper reported that the produce was divided in the field and he did not transport the landonwer's share to his house. Similarly, only 2 share-croppers in village 2 reported that the produce was divided in the field and they did not transport the landonwer's shares to their house.

In addition to these terms, the desperate share-croppers from the poorer landowning groups had to offer some cash advance or labour advance (non-refundable) to some landowners to book the rented-in land. As and when required, the share-croppers from the land-poor groups and their family members including women were expected to give free services to the landowners and be loyal to

them in their local and factional politics. Many share-croppers hesitated to answer queries on free services and loyalty fearing an eviction by the landowners if they found out. When reassured, at least 52.66% of share-croppers in village 1 and 56.57% in village 2, admitted that they had to follow the landowners at the time of local elections and that they had to support them in any dispute arising out of their corrupt activities. At least 25.50% of share-croppers in village 1 and 35.60% in village 2 reported that they or any of their family members including wives, had to render some sort of free services to please the rentier landowners. These extra-economic compulsions were noticed to be greater in the cases of unequals - (i.e. share-croppers from poorer landowning groups and the landowner from richer landowning groups). But when the share cropping was among equals/near equals, this did not apply.

Almost all the share-croppers interviewed thought that the terms of share-cropping had either deteriorated or had not changed over the previous thirty years. None of them thought that these had improved from their standpoint.

Although terms and conditions have deteriorated over the last three decades, share-cropping still persists. This is because of the acute pressure on land. Since employment opportunities outside agriculture are still very limited, poorer households with abundant labour supplies try hard to find agricultural land for share-cropping. There are also social pressures to remain in cultivation rather than become wage labourers in rural Bangladesh. The situation is, however, changing fast where modern inputs have made some inroads. Where this is so, more and more people are resorting to cultivation under their own supervision rather than renting out land.[8]

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[8] Jansen noted in the context of rural Bangladesh:

> It is regarded as more beneficial to organise production on irrigated land with wage labour, even if the share-croppers would be willing to accept as little as 25% instead of the normal 75% of the crop (Jansen, 1979: 76).

In the case of local variety cultivation, landowners could still gain by offering land under the share-cropping system. In village 2, where the irrigation system was the least developed, the richer households still depended to a larger extent on share-cropping. The share-croppers, though getting no positive returns from cultivation after deducting the cost of their labour, still hang on to the system as they consider it at least better than being unemployed; while, also, they derive some psychological satisfaction from being krishaks (farmers).

In any case, share-cropping as a method of surplus extraction was quite significant in areas where the level of productive forces was still very low and the landowners could get 50% or more of the produce without taking any risk or responsibility for cultivation. The share-croppers on the other hand continued to submit to this exploitation as they did not have alternative job opportunities. But in areas where modern inputs have made sufficient inroads landowners have recovered their operated land from the share-croppers in order to cultivate the profit yielding HYV crops themselves with the help of wage labourers. The share-croppers, in turn, have been abandoning the age-old profession of share-cropping and joining the ranks of wage labourers. But the productive forces have not been developing fast enough to absorb all the surplus labourers in the rural areas. The land/man ratio is very unfavourable and many households wanted to cultivate some land as share-croppers. The landowners also offered small pieces of land to a number of share-croppers in order to realise other long-term objectives. Landowners engaged some of these households to give them support in factional politics and supply them with virtually free services in the lean period and paid services(at a lower wage rate) during the peak period. The support of these share-croppers was then utilized to strenghten their political position and they were thus able to acquire access to the various governmental inputs supplied through the local power structure.

5. Usufructuary Land Mortgage:

Usufructuary Land Mortgage, though diminished in scale, especially in the areas where modern inputs have poured in, is still an important process contributing to the alienation of land from the poorer landowning groups. Mortgaging of land, coupled with money lending, contributes substantially to the transferring of assets from a larger section of the peasantry to a small number of usurers. In recent times, the nature of usury has changed and in most cases rich peasants themselves have been advancing loans in order to acquire land from the poorer peasantry. In most cases, land, once transferred, did not return to the original owners because the rate of interest and further loans accumulated.

In our study villages, mortgaging of land was found to be more prevalent in village 2 (in Northern Bengal) where the level of productive forces was less developed, than in village 1 (Eastern Bengal).

Thus in 1981, only .48% of the total rented-in land in village-1 was found under usufructuary mortgage. But the proportion in village 2 was 19.89%. Only 2% of the farms in village 1 were involved in mortgaging relations. But as many as 17.52% of the farms were so engaged in village 2.

If we analyse the landownership pattern of those households which mortgage out land in both of our study villages, we find that 90% of them came from the poorer landowning groups. On the other hand, the majority of those who mortgaged in were either medium of rich farmers. There were one or two exceptions from the lower land-owning groups (but they had trading as a secondary profession). The proportion of farms mortgaging in and out was higher in 1972 and, of course, much higher in 1951. Thus, in village 2, the proportion was 22.8% of all farms in 1972 and 28.27% of all farms in 1951. In village 2, 27% of the mortgaging debtors reported that they had had to transfer the title of the land to the mortgagee at some time during the period of three years before the date of interview.

A number of other studies confirm this process of land alienation through mortgaging of land (Wood, 1976; Majumder, 1976; Jannuzi and Peach, 1977; Jabbar, 1978; Rahman 1979).

Apart from mortgaging out land, farms were found to borrow from other sources, mostly from the richer households, giving different kinds of securities. In our survey we found at least 60% of the mortgagor farms to be indebted to various sources compared to 30% and 35% in case of mortgagee and non-mortgaging farms respectively. In most cases tenants borrowed from their landlords.[9]

A sizeable proportion of these farms borrowed money from people who were as good as professional money lenders. We identified at least 8 money lenders from village 1 and 11 from village 2. 50% of the money lenders in village 1 and 22.22% in village 2 took land as collateral against these loans and appropriated it because the mortgagors could never repay the loans.

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[9] A correlation between tenancy and credit markets has also been found by a number of micro level village studies (Hossain, 1977; Rahman, 1979). Hossain pointed out that it was a common practice for landlords in the Thakurgaon area of Dinajpore district to advance loans in kind/cash to the tenant. These were recovered at the time of sharing the produce, with an interest rate of 50 or more percent for the season. Rahman found that in two areas of Mymensingh and Comilla districts (both in the Eastern part of the country) 46% of tenants obtained loans from their landlords in 1974-75. The rate of interest was about 50% in the case of production loans and nearly 100% in the case of consumption loans. Thus, over and above the tenancy share, landlords (in the role of money-lenders) were able to extract further surplus from tenants through the payment of interest on loans. The non-institutional credit market thus operates basically to supplement the tenancy market and thereby increases the possibilities of extraction of surplus from small peasants by large landowners.

MONEY LENDERS:

Money-lenders interviewed by us came from various land-owning groups but most of them obviously came from the land-rich groups. 60% of the money-lenders reported that they provided loans for consumption purposes and one or two of them also advanced loans for trade and commerce.

The most common period of advancing loans in both cash and kind was immediately before the harvest when the price of food was normally very high. These loans had to be repaid immediately after the harvest. The rate of interest varied from village to village but in any case was never below 100% in any of the villages. The rate of interest was as high as 200% in one case in village 2.

From our field observation, we found that usufructuary mortgage coupled with money lending which forced people into distress sale did in fact play an important role in the process of increasing landlessness in Bangladesh. Mortgagors, already in the poorer landowning groups, fell down the landowning ladder after transferring a part of their land to the mortgagee. This reduced their economic strength and they had to go back to the mortgagee for further loans at an exhorbitant rate of interest. Mortgaging out land not only reduced the repayment capacity of the household concerned but also made it less creditworthy to other landowners. Once bonded with some landowner, the mortgagor was trapped in a vicious cycle which ended with all his land being mortgaged out. He could hardly repossess that land and would be obliged to sell off land mortgaged bit by bit as the economic pressure on him increased in magnitude. Conversely, the income of mortgagees further increased while they remained creditors to the mortgagors.

Thus, mortgagors entered into a process which forced them gradually to reduce their landholding and ultimately become landless. Based on a survey in a village in Comilla, Wood 1976(b) also indicated the persistence of this process of land alienation. He pointed out that through mortgage arrangements and credit relations small peasants land was gradually expropriated.

As a result of this expropriation by the large landowners, the smaller farmer was gradually transformed into a share cropper on his own legal holding, a dependent labourer, an insecure itinerant trader, or a migrant agricultural labourer.

6. Relations of Exchange:

Relations of exchange involving different groups of the peasantry also play a vital role in the appropriation of the surplus by the land-rich groups from the land-poor groups. And growing market relations are, in fact, the driving force behind such appropriation of the surplus. In more concrete terms, the nature and level of commoditisation determine the extent of surplus appropriation in the exchange sector. Such an appropriation can take place, because one group of participants in this process of commoditisation is in a much more advantageous position than others.

From our field investigation, we found that villages have become more market-oriented than they were say, thirty years ago, and money has increasingly become the medium of exchange relations in recent times. This increase in commoditisation and monetisation though limited, played an inportant role in differentiating the peasantry in terms of their assets and production in our study villages.

We will examine the extent and nature of market relations involving the following:

(i) Land
(ii) Food and other household necessities
(iii) Labour power.

7. Commoditisation of Land:

Due to growing economic pressure in recent times, increasing population and a squeeze on the renting of land, the value of land has increased over recent years thereby covering land into a commodity. This increased commoditisation has quickly enriched a few and ruined many others. This has resulted in a sharp process of land alienation through sales of land by small holders to large land-owners and to speculators. The increase in the value of land has been sharpest in village 1 where a land-rich peasantry has taken advantage of the inflow of modern inputs, especially power pumps, and amassed greater surplus during the last decade than ever before. The value of land also rose in village 2 .

The price of land has been steadily increasing in both villages we studied. In village 1, the price of an acre of crop land has increased by about 6 times in a decade. In village 2, the increase was also similar . Following table gives us the trend in the price of land.

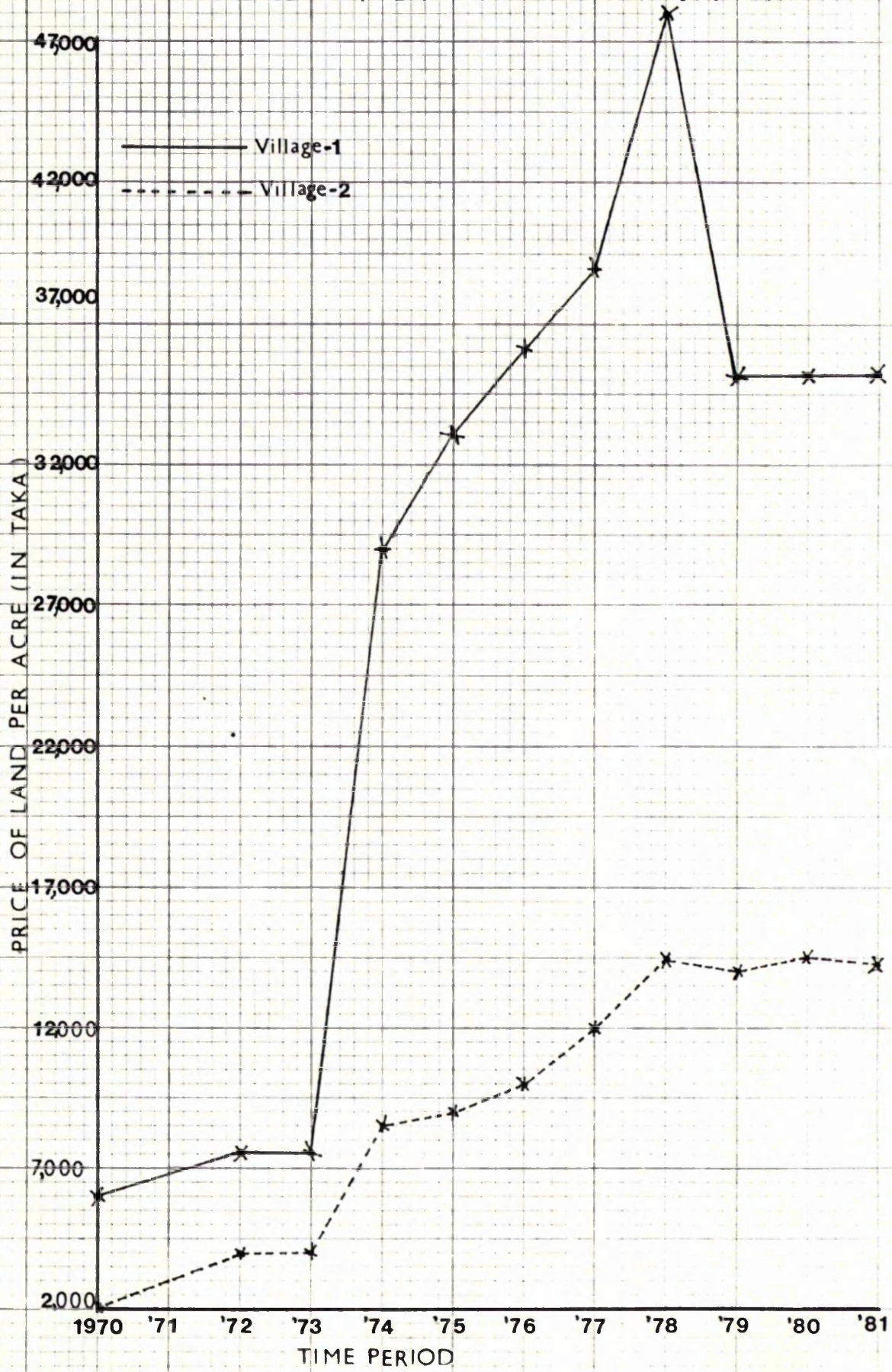
TABLE 8.6

PRICE OF CROP LAND : 1970-81

Year	Price of crop land per acre (in taka)	
	Village - 1	Village - 2
1970	5,769	2,000
1971	N.A.	N.A.
1972	9,615	3,750
1973	9,616	3,750
1974	28,846	8,500
1975	32,692	9,000
1976	34,615	10,000
1977	38,461	12,000
1978	48,075	14,560
1979	35,000	14,000
1980	35,000	14,500
1981	35,000	14,257

GRAPH 8·1

INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF LAND : 1970 - 81



The price of land shot up immediately after the war of liberation (1971) as terms of trade began to move in favour of agriculture (Rahman, 1979). The price of rice began to rise and reached an all time high in 1974 when the country experienced a traumatic famine. The price continued to rise as the inflow of modern inputs into the rural areas increased. The price of land has stabilized during the last two or three years as did the price of rice, but that too was at a level much higher than in 1970 (see graph 8.i).

Land is still an important prestige symbol and the crucial means of production in the villages. Hence the higher values of land. The rising trend in the price of land is well illustrated in the graph attached. As the price of land, rose it went out of reach of the land-poor peasantry and made the landrich groups enormously rich. This has accelerated the processes of land sale and purchase and thus exacerbated the process of alienation of land from the poorer to the richer groups.

8. Sale and Purchese of land:

There was an enormous increase in the number of transactions in land over the last decade in both of our study villages and the frequency of these transactions reached a peak in 1974, the famine year. In all these transactions the poor and middle peasants appeared mostly as sellers and the rich land-owners as buyers of land. Many other studies support this.[10] In our study, we found

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[10] A survey of 14 districts of Bangladesh organised by the Ministry of Agriculture shows that small holders sold 53% of their owned land in 1969/70 and 60% of their land in 1972/73 (Osmani and Rahman, 1981: 27-28). However, the large landowners sold only 4 percent of their owned land in both the years (i.e. 1969/70 and 1972/73) (Khan, 1977: 159).

In another study, it was found that the top 12% of households bought about two-thirds of all their land transferred during the period 1968-78, while nearly 50% of the land came from households in the poorest landowning groups (owning less than one acre)

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61 households who sold their land during the period 1972-81 in village 1. By comparison we found only 18 households who sold their land between 1960-1970. Even if we include a few more households to balance the cases of underestimation, the figure was still below 30, or less than half the later figure. Similarly, in village 2 we found 57 households selling land during 1972-81 while the figure for 1960-70 was only 15. We got a similar picture when we approached the problem from the other side (i.e. looking at purchase transactions amongst the villagers). We found a similar rise in the level of transactions during the seventies, especially after the famine in 1974.

We investigated the land ownership pattern of the households who sold their land during the period 1972-81. The following table gives the group figures.

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footnote cont'd.

(Hossain, 1981:24). In yet another survey of eight villages in 1974 (the famine year) it was found that sales of land increased significantly in that year compared to other years. The survey also showed that the majority of land sales during 1972-74 were from farmers owning 2 acres or less and most the purchasers were farmers with more than 2 acres of land (Alamgir, 1977, tables 22-29).

TABLE 8.7

Sellers of land by landowning groups: 1972-81

Landowning Groups (acres)	Village 1		Village 2	
	No. of Sellers	% age of Sellers	No. of Sellers	% age of Sellers
1. 0	6	9.84	8	14.03
2. 01-.50	4	6.55	20	35.09
3. .51-1.50	19	31.15	9	15.79
4. 1.51-2.50	17	27.87	-	-
5. 2.51-3.50	4	6.55	4	7.02
6. 3.51-5.00	5	8.19	4	7.02
7. 5.01-7.50	-	-	7	12.28
8. 7.51.10.00	6	9.84	4	7.02
9. 10.01 and above	-	-	1	1.75
All Groups	61	99.99	57	100.00

Table 8.7 shows that three-quarters (75.41%) of the sellers of land in village 1 and 64.91% in village 2 belonged to the poorer landowning groups owning less than 2.50 acres of land. On the other hand, the corresponding figures for those who belonged to larger landowner groups (with more than 7.50 acres) were respectively 9.84% and 8.77% in villages 1 and 2.

Not all of these sellers sold their land to the households belonging to our study villages. In village 1, 89.14% of sellers in the poorer groups (owning less than 2.50 acres of land) reported that they sold their land to the larger landowning groups, owning more than 5.00 acres of land. 100% of the sellers in larger landowning groups said that they sold their land to households who owned either equal or more land than they did. In village 2 the trend was similar. 60% of the sellers from poorer groups said that they sold to the rich and upper-middle peasants, while 80% of the richer sellers said that they sold their land only to the rich peasantry.

We found that the rich bought from the poor peasantry but the poor were rarely in a position to buy any land from the rich. There was always a bias against the poorer peasantry in the land market. This is also confirmed by our findings on the landownership pattern of all the purchasers of land during the 1970s (whether or not they bought from sellers in their own village) in our study villages.

TABLE 8.8

Landownership Pattern of Purchasers : 1972-81

Landowning Groups (acres)		Village-2		Village-2	
		No. of Purchasers	Percentage of Purchasers	No. of Purchasers	Percentage of Purchasers
1.	0	1	.73	2	3.57
2.	.01-.50	11	8.09	8	14.28
3.	.51-1.50	10	7.35	2	3.57
4.	1.51-2.50	15	11.03	2	3.57
5.	2.51-3.50	19	13.97	12	21.43
6.	3.51-5.00	23	16.91	12	21.43
7.	5.01-7.50	14	10.29	11	19.64
8.	7.51-10.00	20	14.70	2	3.57
9.	10.01 +	23	16.91	5	8.93
All Groups		136	99.98	56	99.99

Note : The number of purchasers may be more than the number of h/hs in each group as they sometimes participated in more than one transaction.

Table 8.8 shows that in village 1 only 27.2% of the buyers belonged to the poorer groups who owned less than 2.50 acres of land. On the other hand, the rich and middle peasantry constituted the bulk of land buyers in this village. 41.9% of the buyers belonged to upper landowning groups (owning more than 5.00 acres of land). In village 2, 21.42% of the buyers belonged to the bottom four groups while 32.74% of them belonged to the top three groups. The middle peasantry constituted quite a substantial portion of land buyers in this village.

In any case, the overall picture was differentiated. Buyers generally came from the land-rich groups and they normally bought land from the land-poor groups. Thus the process of land transfer was found to be biased in favour of the land-rich groups of the peasantry in both villages.

As a rule, poorer households clung to their small pieces of land with the utmost tenacity and sold them only when they had been pushed into a desperate economic situation.

9. Causes of Land Sale:

The majority of them reported that they sold their land to buy food. On the other hand the richer groups sold their land in order to invest money either in business or in politics. Rich farmers sometimes sold a part of their land when involved in litigation. Spending money in litigation is also a kind of investment for the rich peasantry. In most cases, as we observed, rich peasants became involved in land disputes[11] with their

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11 In order to start a land dispute normally a reason is needed. Agricultureal land has different'degrees of security' - a legacy of the way the land tenure system has been evolved in Bangladesh. The most secure land is inherited land with a registration document in one's own or one's father's name. The land should also have the proper tax clearence papers and the land record certificates in one's own name. Less secure land is sister's or aunt's inherited land, land on which tax has not been paid for long periods, char land, and land belonging to

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poorer relations or neighbours and by manipulating local and Government judicial institutions they grabbed the land of the poor peasantry. Substantial bribes were reported to have been given by rich peasants of our study villages to the local Tahsilders, C.O. (Rev) and magistrates to get a favourable verdict in land disputes. Late Osman Chairman, Montaz Ali and Jamiruddin (both U.P. members) and Rais Uddin Mondal and Upeswar Mondal in village 2 were a few amongst the rural rich who were frequently involved in such land disputes and finally grabbed the land. Rich people know that if they have no chance of winning a land dispute they would by bribing the officials, at least cause the case to linger. As the cases drag on a man who legally owns the land gets impoverished and finally is forced to sell the land to the rich farmers (often in the guise of 'amicable settlement').

According to our investigation, in village 1, 51% of the total sellers reported that they sold land to buy food and other consumer goods, The figure for village 2 on this account was 52.63%. 15% of the sellers in village 1 and 17.54% in village 2 said that they had to sell land in order to repay debt. 12.72% of the sellers in village 1 and 3.50% in village 2 reported that they sold land to buy draught animals. 11% of the sellers in village 1, and 5.70% in village 2, reported that they had to sell land to meet medical expenses for their family members. The remainder sold land for various 'unproductive' pruposes including weddings, social formalities connected with death (Sradh, Chehlum), litigation, gambling etc. Wedding of daughters,

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footnote cont'd.

Hindus who have left for India. Rich and influencial peasants with better connections with the officials and lawyers and with money always look for any of these legal loopholes and start legal disputes themselves or encourage others to start the same. At the end of the day, they become the owners of such disputed land.

sisters accounted for most of those 'unproductive' expenses because of the important role still played by dowries in match-making in rural Bangladesh.

Those who reported that they had to sell land to buy food and consumer goods mostly belonged to the poorer groups of the peasantry. 82.60% and 93.23% of them belonged to poorer groups owning less than 2.50 acres in villages 1 and 2 respectively.

Similarly, of the sellers reporting sale of land for debt repayment, 50% belonged to poorer groups in village 1 and 60% in village 2. In both these villages, almost all of those who reported having sold land to buy draught animals belonged to the group owning between 1.51 and 2.50 acres. Most of those who sold land for unproductive purposes belonged to middle and upper groups, with a few exceptions in the case of litigation. Most of the poorer got involved in litigation (primarily about land disputes), as we have indicated earlier, following active encouragement from local factional leaders who were invariably rich landowners. In the process they sold their land to the richer peasantry in order to meet the leagal expenses.

Thus we have seen that the poorer peasantry, responded to economic pressure by selling land to the richer peasantry and further worsened the situation of inequality. The land market has therefore been aiding the richer groups because their higher purchasing power has enabled them to alienate the poor groups from the land they once owned.

10. Sale and Purchase of Other Commodities:

Not only has the commoditization of land been increasing over the last decade or so. Other products, including food, were found to have been marketed to a greater extent in recent times. More households have been drawn into market circuits over the last few years and they now depend on markets more than ever before.

A 1963-64 survey estimated that about 10 percent of the paddy produced was sold in the market (GEOP, 1963-64). This proportion has gone up since then. Particularly after 1971, the proportion of paddy sold in the market increased enormously. From our field investigation we found that 53.2% of the total paddy produced in village 1 was sold in the market during 1980-81. In village 2, although the proportion was lower than that in village 1, at 42.58% it was nevertheless much higher than the figure for 1963-64.

The proportion of paddy sold has increased dramatically during the last two decades. In addition to the market participation of the richer peasantry, as more and more peasants became impoverished and indebted, they entered into the market with an increased proportion of their produce. The poorer households, as we have observed, reduced some of their consumption (for example, on clothing, medicine, draught animals, taxes etc.) and went to the market with their produce immediately after the harvest. They also became indebted during the slack period and had to sell a sizeable proportion of their produce immediately after harvest to repay these debts. The rich peasantry on the other hand had the staying power to keep away from the market immediately after the harvest and sold the produce when the poorer groups began to buy back. We have presented data on the timing of this sale by different groups in table 7·14

In the following table we can see the amount of produce sold by different groups of the peasantry.

TABLE 8.9

PADDY SOLD AS PERCENTAGE OF PADDY PRODUCED BY LANDOWNING GROUPS: 1980-81

Landowning Groups (acres)	Amount of paddy sold as % of total paddy produced in:	
	Village 1	Village 2
1. 0	38.20	14.09
2. .01 - .50	16.20	28.77
3. .51 - 1.50	28.30	26.15
4. 1.51 - 2.50	57.60	20.77
5. 2.51 - 3.50	30.70	34.48
6. 3.51 - 5.00	42.10	34.74
7. 5.01 - 7.50	40.70	32.84
8. 7.51 - 10.00	56.50	50.96
9. 10.01 +	50.90	51.27
ALL GROUPS	53.20	42.58

Table 8.9 clearly shows a greater commoditisation amongst all groups of the peasantry. It is true that a sizeable portion of these figures in the poorer groups of the peasantry was due to distress sale, but even then one can argue that market relations have expanded during recent times. This is especially true for the richer peasantry. Back in 1969/70, households owning more than 7.5 acres of land used to market 34.6% of their output (PIDE, 1969/70 in Hossain, 1977). This figure increased to 36.8% in 1973/74 (BIDS, 1973/74). But as we can see, by 1980-81, the figure has sur-passed 50% in both of our study villages.

Table 8.10 gives a comparative picture of the extent of commoditisation of paddy which is the principal produce of Bangladesh.

TABLE 8.10

PERCENTAGES OF FARMS SELLING DIFFERENT PROPORTIONS OF PADDY PRODUCE: 1973-74 - 1980-81

Items	% of all farms		
	1973-74	1980-81	
	Bangladesh	Village 1	Village 2
1. Percentage of farms selling over 25% of total paddy produced	26.6	16.45	26.8
2. Percentage of farms selling over 40% of total paddy produced	6.5	6.9	8.5
3. Percentage of farms selling over 50% of total paddy produced	1.0	9.5	12.5

Source: 1973/74, BIDS, Survey on Agrarian Markets and Structure of Income.

1980-81, Survey by Author (See Rahman et al 1982).

The above table indicates that the proportion of farms selling at least 50% of their paddy has gone up significantly over last few years. Whereas a survey in 1973/74 found only 1% of farms who sold at least 50% of the paddy they produced, we found in 1980-81 as many as 9.5% such farms in village 1 and 12.5% in village 2.

Not only was a greater proportion of the produce of the richer peasantry seen to have been entering into the market; the richer groups were also found to be better able to manipulate the market and sold their

produce at a comparatively higher price. The following table gives the different prices for different groups of the peasantry.

TABLE 8.11

PADDY PRICES : 1980-81

Landowning Groups (acres owned)	Average price per maund of paddy sold (takas)	
	Village 1	Village 2
1. 0	92.00	85.00
2. .01 - .50	92.50	89.40
3. .51 - 1.50	95.00	93.71
4. 1.51 - 2.50	96.00	93.00
5. 2.51 - 3.50	100.00	95.00
6. 3.51 - 5.00	103.00	98.00
7. 5.01 - 7.50	103.50	100.00
8. 7.51 - 10.00	105.00	101.00
9. 10.01 +	107.50	101.75

Thus table 8.11 reveals that the poorer groups had to sell their paddy at a cheaper price (immediately after harvest, as indicated in table 7.14). Since all of the poor households needed cash for various purposes, they pushed the price to a lower level by increasing the supplies. The richer groups sold at a time when most of these poor households started buying back and so raised the level of demand. Because of this, the price of paddy sold by the richer groups was found to be higher. The poorer peasantry then suffered both ways - as sellers and as buyers. On the other hand, richer groups sold at a higher price and got a higher return from the

produce. The great majority of the richer households were also involved in speculative trade. They bought paddy when the price remained very low and hoarded it only to sell at a higher price when it became scarce. Besides, most of these households also involved themselves in regular grain trade as they could take advantage of their high staying power and monopoly over the limited storage facilities available to them. Both villages 1 and 2 were flanked by market places - Sonatia Bazar in the case of village 1 and Hatshahar in the case of village 2. Sonatia Bazar is one of the biggest market places in the region and has accelerated the processes of exchange in village 1. In recent times, this market place has become particularly famous for sale of paddy and rice and dozens of trucks are seen carrying paddy almost every day during the period immediately after the harvest. Even by the early seventies villages had not seen a single truck in this market place but now big traders, in alliance with local traders / rich peasants are buying thousands of maunds of paddy every season. Hatshahar Bazar in village 2, though still not that big, has facilitated to a great extent the growth of exchange relations in and around the village. More than 50% of the households of village 2 reported that they sold their items to small Beparis, Farias who would in turn sell them to big traders. While purchasing also, a sizeable portion of the respondents reported that they bought their items from petty traders, who in turn were linked up with big traders. Thus we noticed a growing traders' exchange circuit in the villages we studied.

Rich peasants in both villages 1 and 2 were observed to have taken advantage of their economic strength. Dictating the terms of toll collections in the market,[12] they enjoyed a greater share of the surplus transferred through various exchange relationships with the poorer producers. The rich peasants, being in the Bazar Committee or having their sons in the Youth Complex,[13] extorted a huge amound of surplus from the petty traders and producers.

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[12] Their representatives were dominating the Bazar Management Committees.

[13] Youth complex, mainly managed by youths from richer households was in charge of collection of tolls from sellers and buyers.

Though market relations have been expanding continuously, money did not play a very long-term role in exchange transactions. About 80% of the exchanges undertaken by the villagers conformed to C-M-C i.e. Commodities were sold to obtain money to buy, almost immediately, the various necessities of life. Moreover, we hardly noticed any itinerant trader visiting the villages for courtyard purchases as most people now prefer to go to the market place. Also we found that barter exchanges had almost died out and most people now look upon the market place as the ultimate source of their day to day necessities. Even in the late sixties one could come across the following types of barter exchange in rural areas of Bangladesh in general, and the villages we studied in particular:

(i) Exchange of meal/rice for services (e.g. agricultural wage labour, haircutting, carpeting, small repairing jobs etc.).

(ii) Exchanges in petty shopping (e.g. between rice and betelnuts/betel leaf; between rice/paddy and utensils).

(iii) Exchange of oil and oil seeds.

But all these exchanges have been diminishing over the last decade and most people were found to depend on the market place for these commodities. The barbers, instead of going to the houses at a regular interval and collecting rice/paddy during the harvesting season, were seen to sit in the market place and cut hair in exchange for money. People were also seen to visit the barber's house and pay him in money.

Barter exchanges, though not yet wiped out, were less prominent in village 1. In village 2, we noticed some such exchanges. The extent of barter exchanges depended on the level of development of productive forces and the expansion of market relations.

That market relations have pervaded the villages of Bangladesh became clear when we asked the household heads how many of them had gone to the market place, how much they spent and on what items in the preceding week. More than 80% of the respondents replied that they had gone to the market place and bought/sold some items with cash. The items bought were mostly food and other daily necessities. Food was the most common item for the poorer groups. Let us see how much cash they spent on an average in one week. This would give a rough estimate of the extent of their market participation. These questions were asked during June/July, a comparatively hard period for the poorer groups. Table 8.12 gives us the details.

TABLE 8.12

Money spent during the week preceding the date of interview

Landowning Groups (acres)	Per centage of the households who went to the market place during the week preceeding the date of interview		Amount of cash spent on food and other necessities (TK)		Money spent per household (TK)	
	Village-1	Village-2	Village-1	Village-2	Village-1	Village-2
1	91.66	75.41	370.50	576.00	33.68	19.86
2	90.00	71.42	1397.75	202.50	22.18	13.46
3	86.49	75.00	836.00	119.50	26.12	9.91
4	93.94	70.00	623.75	125.00	20.12	12.50
5	94.12	55.00	439.75	108.00	39.97	18.00
6	85.72	60.65	267.50	115.20	22.29	19.20
7	100.00	75.75	271.75	89.50	38.82	21.50
8	100.	100.00	437.25	203.00	48.58	29.00
9	100.00	90.00	409.50	75.50	68.25	37.75
All Groups	91.00	69.66	5053.75	1614.20	27.76	19.45

Items bought/sold in these transactions included rice, vegetables, meat, fish, milk, cooking oil, fuel, cloth etc. As we can see from table 8.12 quite a substantial amount of money has been spent by individual households even in the lean periods. The money spent per household is higher in village 1 than in village 2. This, again, reflects the higher level of productive forces in village 1 and hence the higher average purchasing power. Whereas an average household could spend Taka 27.76 in village 1, the corresponding figure for village 2 was Taka 19.45. We can also see substantial differences amongst different groups as regards the level of spending. The top landowning groups spent at least twice the amount of the poorer groups. One aspect is worth noting. In both villages 1 and 2, the households in group 1, mostly landless agricultural labourers, spent on average more than the poorer groups with some land. This again is evidence for the fact that the average agricultural wage earner is slightly better off than the marginal farmer who still clings to tiny patches of land. However, the condition of agricultural labourers also varied between the two villages. Village 2 in North Bengal, with no irrigation facilities within its boundaries was much worse off than village 1 in East Bengal which had seventeen power pumps within its boundaries and hence better employment opportunities.

If we look at the marketing situation from the sellers' point of view, we get an equally monetized picture. In village 1 villagers managed to take a total cash income of Taka 8,208 during one week by selling different items, mostly paddy/rice. Rich peasantry, owning more than 7.50 acres of land, accounted for more than 50% of this income. Peasants from the bottom groups also sold quite a substantial amount, but 80% of their cash came from selling labour. In village 2, the amount of cash earned through selling different commodities, including labour, though quite small compared to village 1, was around Taka 2,500.00. Once again, the top two richer groups accounted for about 48% of this money income.

12. Commoditisation of Labour:

In recent times both villages witnessed a phenomenal growth in the extent of the sale of labour power (as indicated in Chapter IX). Eve expanding labour sale has become an important form of exchange and a mechanism of transfer of surplus. We will discuss this aspect in more detail in the next chapter. Besides these economic relations of exchange, many extra-economic relations, particularly those involving the state, have been playing an important role in transferring surplus from the poorer to the richer groups of the peasantry (see Chapter X).

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Differences in the material elements of production amongst land-poor and land-rich groups of the peasantry can be explained in terms of relations of production and exchange. We found that richer peasants had stronger command over the surplus generated in the rural economy. They extract this surplus by virtue of their advantageous position in the production relations:

(i) Most households in rural Bangladesh still live on agriculture either as cultivators or as agricultural wage labourers.

(ii) There has been a shift in the nature of tenancy from share tenancy to fixed-rent tenancy. Share tenancy, too, has been shrinking and turning into a commercial venture, especially, in the areas where modern agricultural inputs have made some inroads.

(iii) Though poor peasants still overcrowd the share/tenancy markets, some of them are leaving to become wage labourers and some rich peasants are taking in rented land. Rich peasants are also resuming part of their rented out land to cultivate it under their own supervision with the help of the wage labourers. This is particularly true in the relatively developed village.

(iv) The terms of share-cropping have also deteriorated over the last decade. Tenants coming from the poorer land groups are the victims of harsher terms. They are also obliged to give extra services to the landowners and remain loyal to them.

(v) Small peasants' land has been gradually expropriated by the rich peasants through mortgage arrangements and credit relations.

(vi) Extent of commoditisation of all items, including land, has expanded over the last decade. Growing market forces and increased market participation by all groups of the peasantry have accentuated the processes of differentiation. The rich peasants who are better endowed with resources and staying power are the beneficiaries of these processes. Landsellers are mostly the poor and lower middle peasants and buyers are the rich peasants. Land price has gone up dramatically. This has helped rich peasantry in alienating land from the poor peasants. Poor peasants, always in debt and with a greater need of cash for buying food and other necessities, sell land whenever in crisis and thus end up as landless.

CHAPTER IX

RURAL PROLETARIANISATION

Differentiation of the peasantry and rural proletarianisation go hand in hand (Lenin, 1977a:180). Generally, growth in hired labourers, deprived of the means of production and reduced to dependence on sale of labour power is taken as a necessary (but not sufficient) condition of proletarianisation (Parthasarathy, 1978: 121). Lenin, however, qualifies a little further to include all types of poor peasantry - allotment-holding farm labourer, unskilled labourer, day labourer, building worker, owner of a tiny patch of land etc. while categorising rural proletariats. The criteria for including poor peasants into this category are insignificant importance of agriculture ("a subsidiary occupation") in their occupational matrices and their extreme vulnerability:

> Insignificant farming on a patch of land, with the farm in a state of utter ruin (particularly evidenced by the leasing out of land), inability to exist without the sale of labour-power (= "industries" of the indigent peasants), an extremely low standard of living(probably lower even than that of the worker without an allotment-— such are the distinguishing features of this type (Lenin, 1977: 180) .

Although the Russian 'allotment-holding farm labourer' category does not exactly fit in the context of Third World peasantries, most of the other elements of Lenin's categorisation of rural proletariats appear to hold good. Our field experience suggests this.

The growth in the number of hired labourers or the sheer vulnerability of the poor peasants do not guarantee rural proletarianisation. It involves some qualitative aspects as well; most importantly the nature of the movement from 'bonded' to 'free' labour (i.e. how far the labour is free to sell his labour and is not tied to a particular employer by bondage of usury of other traditional attachments in the form of patron-client relationship). The purification of wage

relations[1] and the extent of 'class consciousness' (i.e. how far a labourer has transcended the traditional barriers of caste, kinship, religion etc. and what is the stage of his perception of his common interests with the fellow labourers and his class behaviour). Byres describes the latter in terms of 'class-for-itself' (Byres, 1981: 407). If these sufficient conditions are not fully met scholars tend to call this a case of 'partial proletarianisation' (Byres, 1981: 432).[2]

We shall examine these aspects of rural proletarianisation empirically in the context of rural Bangladesh in what follows. We start our analysis with the necessary condition of proletarianisation i.e. the growth of hired labourers.

1 GROWTH OF HIRED LABOURERS:

We witnessed a rising proportion of wage labour in our study villages. Indeed, the necessary condition of proletarianisation appeared to be fulfilled in these villages. The proportion of agricultural labourer households[3] (henceforth ALH) has increased significantly during the last decade. The rate of increase has been higher in village 1, the advanced village. Our fieldwork findings were:

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1 'Purification' of wage relations signifies the emerging relations in which the non-monetary elements of renumeration are progressively suppressed and more of wage labourers get cash payment as determined by the market forces (Goodman and Redclift, 1981: 176-177).

2 Rastyannikov , a Soviet scholar, uses the term 'agrarian proto-proletariat' to characterise the incomplete manifestation of proletarianisation in the context of Indian agriculture (Rastyannikov, 1976: 67-81).

3. Households with at least one male member involved in agricultural wage labour.

TABLE 9.1

VILLAGES-1 AND 2: INCIDENCE OF HIRED LABOUR: 1972-81

Cut-off period and villages	Hired labour-days as % total labour-days	
	for group (a) owning 7.50-10.00 acres	for group (b) owning more than 10.00 acres
1972		
1) Village - 1	48.60	51.00
2) Village - 2	40.50	42.25
1981		
1) Village - 1	70.50	76.60
2) Village - 2	52.50	55.50
PERCENTAGE CHANGE: (1972-81)		
1) Village - 1	+21.90	+25.60
2) Village - 2	+12.00	+13.25

(i) 40% of households in village 1 and 29% in village 2 were ALH during our study period (i.e. 1981). Of them, 35% of total households in village 1 and 21% in village 2 had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation. Total number of working male members involved in seasonal/round the year agricultural wage earning was as high as 148 in village 1 (out of total working males of 371, i.e. 40%) and 52 in village 2 (nut of total working males of 173 i.e. 30%).

(ii) Back in 1972, there were 23% of the households who could be termed as ALH in village 1 (18% of the total households had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation). The corresponding figures for village 2 were 21.50% and 17.50%.

Thus we noticed a significant growth in the proportion of ALH in both of our study villages. The pace of growth was faster in village 1 than in village 2, especially after the installation of seventeen power pumps and the subsequent introduction of new HYV technology. Village 2 had no modern irrigation facilities.

That there was a rise in the proportion of wage labour was also confirmed by the figures from the demand side. We found that the owners of larger landholdings (owning more than 7.50 acres of land) have increased their share of hired labour vis-a-vis total labour employed over the last decade (1972-1981). And the growth has been higher in village 1. While presenting the comparative data, we divided rich peasants into two groups:

(a) those owning 7.50 - 10.00 acres of land and
(b) those owning more than 10.00 acres of land.

As is obvious from table 9.1, the richer landowners, greatly increased the proportion of hired labour[4] in both villages.

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4 Khan made an estimate of growth of landless labourers as a percentage of the total labour force for rural Bangladesh. This macro study demonstrates for Bangladesh as a whole the growth of landless hired labourers. The following table gives Khan's

contd...

WORKER NOVICES:[5]

That landlessness was growing faster, swelling the ranks of the rural proletariat in rural Bangladesh was also confirmed by the rapid growth in the number of 'Worker Novices'.

Our examination of the family history of the AWLs revealed that a significant proportion of them were new comers to the labour market and an important proportion of them reported that they became wage labourers only in their generation (their fathers and grandfathers were either owner or tenant farmers or both). As is clear from table 9.2, quite a sizeable number of the labourers have joined the labour market very recently:

(i) As many as ½(20.25% in village 1 and more than (22.85%) in village 2 of AWLs were 'Worker Novices'. More than ⅓ of them in both the villages entered the labour market after 1972. The rest said that they were AWLs even before 1972

(ii) Nearly half of the AWL (47.27%) in village 1 and ⅓ (34.28%) of them took this occupation during their time. 52.73% in village 1 and 65.72% in village 2 said that their fathers were also AWLs. 31.85% in the former and 25.11% in the latter disclosed that their grandfathers were also AWLs.

Thus we observed that significant section of AWLs were of recent origin and that they have entered the labour market as 'Novices', compelled by economic pressure. These figures enable us to judge how rapid is the process that creates bodies of permanent agricultural labourers in rural Bangladesh.

...footnote contd.
estimate (Khan, 1979:417)

YEAR	Landless labourers as % of total farming labour force	Number of landless agricultural labourers in millions
1951	14.3	1.51
1961	17.5	2.47
1963/64	17.8	2.71
1964/65	17.5	2.75
1967/68	19.8	3.40
1977	26.1	4.54

[5] Those seeking employment for the first time [Lenin, 1977(fifth contd...

TABLE 9.2

TENURE OF AGRICULTURAL WAGE LABOURERS (AWLs)

VILLAGES	% of AWL who joined the labour market			% of AWL who became labourers during their own generation	% of AWL who reported that	
	During the previous 1-3 years ('worker Novics')	After 1972	Before 1972		Their fathers were also AWL	Their grandfathers were also AWL
Village - 1	20.25	37.97	62.03	47.27	52.73	31.82
Village - 2	22.85	37.14	62.86	34.28	65.72	25.71

We have, so far, been focussing on the direct manifestation of the growth of a rural proletariat. But there are also some indirect measures. These include extent of dispossession of the poor peasants by the rich ones manifested through the changes in the structure of landholdings, owned and operated, and changes in the structure of occupations.

Let us now turn to them:

EXTENT OF DISPOSSESSION:

The increase in the relative share of the land holding, owned and operated, of the rich peasants in a land scarce economy indicates dispossession on the other side of the specturm. Byres (1981:428) identifies the following mechanisms/ measures of dispossession of the poor peasantry:

(i) Rich peasants resuming their leased out land for cultivation.

(ii) Rich peasants becoming tenants by acquiring a rising share of the tenated area at the expence of the poor peasants.

(iii) Rich peasants becoming owners of more land by buying land from poor peasants who have been forced into distress sales.

> If rich peasants were successful on any or all of these fronts we would, indeed, be witnessing proletarianisation, or depeasantisation, with poor peasants separated from the means of production and rendered landless (Byres, 1981: 428).

..footnote contd:
printing) :246_/ . We used this empirical category to indicate the agricultural wage labourer (AWL) who has joined the labour market very recently, say, in the last 1-3 years.

Our findings also lend support to most of the above hypotheses on labour processes. As we have in table 6.4 and 6.7, the rich and influencial peasantry have enlarged the size of their operated holdings at the cost of the smaller peasantry. These data indicate that the size of the operated holding of the poor groups has been shrinking over the last decade or so.

To make the point clearer, we present data on operated land (see table 9.3) for two polar groups of the peasantry:

(i) The poor peasants (owning less than 2.50 acres)
(ii) The rich peasants (owning more than 7.50 acres).

Table 9.3 reveals that although the proportion of poor peasant households increased significantly over the 1970s, the amount of operated land under their command has not increased at the same pace. In fact, the amount declined by 1.89% in village 1. By contrast, while the proportion of households belonging to the richer groups declined, the command over the operated land did in fact increase during the period 1972-1981. Again the extent of enlargement of the holdings for the top groups was higher in village 1.

Thus we can argue that a trend of enlargement on the one hand and the dispossession on the other has clearly set in in both villages. The trend is slightly sharper in relatively more developed village 1.

This trend has been effected through all the three mechanisms cited by Byres (as we have witnessed in Chapter VIII see especially tables 8.4 and 8.5). A sharp increase in the population has only further accentuated the trend. With rise of the population, the pace of fragmentation of land following the split in the households has increased and made many households marginalised and impoverished.

TABLE 9.3

COMMAND OVER OPERATED LAND BY POOR AND RICH PEASANTRY: 1972-81

ITEMS	VILLAGE 1	VILLAGE 2
1. % of hhs owning less than 2.50 acres of land (henceforth group A) in:		
a) 1972	67.05	54.32
b) 1981	76.00	68.59
2. % change in the no. of HHs belonging to group A in: 1972-81	+8.95	+14.27
3. % of total operated land held by group A in:		
a) 1972	31.70	18.66
b) 1981	29.81	20.84
4. % change in operated land held b y group A in: 1972-81	-1.89	+2.18
5. % of HHs owning more than 7.5 acres of land (henceforth Group B) in:		
a) 1972	8.10	9.87
b) 1981	7.50	6.61
6. % chnage in the no; of hhs belonging to Grop B.	-.60	-3.26
7. % of total land held by Grop B in:		
a) 1972	28.88	38.71
b) 1981	38.21	42.39
8. % change in operated land by group B in 1972-81	+9.33	+4.28

In such a situation, the choices open to poor peasants are reduced and they are left with fewer potential roles (most predominantly as wage labourers) . Hence the growth of wage labourers in rural areas is almost concomitant with the foregoing tendencies.

The fewer the roles to which they ultimately adjust, the more they tend to be clearly class-based and more specific. Griffin visualizes this in these words:

> Occupation will become more specific, social relations will become more distinct and the customary terms on whicch services are exchanged will tend to give way to formal co contracts.....The numerous people who formerly were excersizing .....on a small scale will find that they have less control over their lives (Griffin, 1974: 74).

Let us now examine the occupation structure (both present and past) of the AWLs to see if these trends were at work or not.

THE CHANGING OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE:

We observed more specific occupational roles for most of the households in both the villages especially in the poorer groups. Previously many households were part owner-part tenant, part wage labourer-part owner, part carpenter - part owner. But today more people were forced to take a single occupation. This was particularly true in village 1. In this village, more households now solely depend on the occupation of wage labourer.

We observed a sizeable proportion of AWLs had cultivation (either as self-operated small farms or share-croppers or both) as the main occupation before entering into the labour market - yet another indication of the process of dispossession.

(i) At least 18.99% of AWLs in village 1 and 13.63 in village 2, revealed that their principal occupation had been share cropping and that they had to surrender their erstwhile rented in land to the rich land owners.

(ii) 17.72% in village 1 and 20.00% in village 2 said that they were previously small peasants, but could not withstand the economic pressures imposed on them in recent years and had to either sell or mortgage all or part of their land. And they finally ended up as AWLs. Most of this category of AWLs have joined the labour market after 1972. But it may not only be the fully or partly dispossessed households which became ALHs; a significant proportion of households with some land (even up to 2.50 acres of owned land) also entered the labour market. Most of those who had some land were seasonal wage labourers.[6] An examination of the land ownership pattern of ALHs also testifies to this trend.

We observed a higher incidence of AWLs in the poorer groups of the peasantry. Thus:

(i) 75% of the absolutely landless households in village 1 and 65.51% in village 2 had agricultural wage earning as the principal occupation. The rest of them were mainly destitutes and had no fixed occupations.

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6. Households with a small amount of cultivated land mostly have surplus family labour. So they can always send one or two family members to earn some wages during the peak season of cultivation, when the demand for hired labour is usually highest.

TABLE 9.4

LANDOWNERSHIP PATTERN OF AGRICULTURAL WAGE EARNING HOUSEHOLDS: 1981

ITEMS	Landownership Gropus									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	ALL GROUPS
VILLAGE - 1										
a. No. of HH	12	70	37	33	12	14	7	9	6	200
b. No. of Agricultural Wage Earning HH	9	55	13	9	-	-	-	-	-	80
c.(b) as % of (a)	75.00	78.00	35.13	9.09	-	-	-	-	-	40.00
VILLAGE - 2										
a. No. of HH	29	21	15	18	14	9	7	2	6	121
b. No. of Agricultural HH	18	10	5	1	1	-	-	-	-	35
c.(b) as% of (a)	65.51	47.61	33.33	5.55	5.00	-	-	-	-	29.00

(ii) 78.57% of the households of the second group (owning .01-.50 acres) in village 1 and 47.61% in village 2 were ALHs. The rest of them were either share croppers or petty traders and part-time artisans.

(iii) 35.13% of households from third group (owning .51-1.50 acres) in village 1 and 33.33% of households in village 2 engaged at least one of their male members as AWLs.

(iv) 9.09% and 5.55% of households in group 4 (owning 1.51-2.50 acres) were ALHs.

These figures suggest that more and more members of poor groups of the peasantry have been getting involved in agricultural wage earning.

There also emerged a trend from the land distribution tables (for example tables 6.9, 6.10, 6.12 and 6.13) that the poor peasants with a very small amount of owned land had better left their traditional profession of cultivation and joined the ranks of the AWLs. The discrepancy between non-owning and non-operating households suggests such a trend. Thus, we found twelve households as non-owning and fifty one as non-operating in village 1 in 1981. This indicates that at least 39 households (i.e. 19.5% of the total households) from other groups had abandoned their tiny patches of land and opted to become ALHs. By contrast, there were only 5 such households (4.13% of total households) in village 2. Unlike village 1, there was an acute shortage of employment opportunities in village 2 and quite naturally most of the poor households clung to their small patches of land. This, as we shall see, has a wider implication on the extent and nature of rural proletarianisation.

That a greater number of AWLs were coming from poor groups of the peasantry (with some land) was also indicated by the distribution of the sources of income. As we have seen in Chapter VIII percentages of income deriving from agricultural wages in groups 1, 2 and 3 of village 1 were 79.43%, 69.18% and 31.23% respectively. The corresponding figures in village 2 were 67.78%, 41.00% and 6.71% respectively.

The higher pace of growth in the proportion of AWLs in village 1 than in village 2 may be explained as follows:

(i) Village 1 has a greater inequality of the material elements of production (as demonstrated in Chapter VI and VII). This means that more households from land poor groups have been dispossessed by the richer groups in village 1.

(ii) With the installation of seventeen modern irrigation pumps and the inflow of increased amount of modern agricultural inputs e.g. fertilizer, pesticides, credit etc, the cropping intensity has greatly increased in village 1. This has led to higher employment opportunities round the year. Not only in village, but in many other villages in the locality Deep Tube Wells (DTWs) have been installed. Consequently, the production of HYV has gone up. Simultaneously, the employment opportunities for hired labourers[7] have also gone up in village 1. A sizeable proportion of households in this village have, therefore, become AWHs despite the fact that they owned some agricultural land (though very small in amount). The opportunities for share cropping have also shrunk (see Chapter VIII). However, circumstances differed in village 2. This village, located in the interior part of the relatively underdeveloped Northern Bengal, had experienced very little modernisation in agriculture. Not a single power pump has yet been set up in this village. Only a neglible proportion of agricultural land is under irrigation. The adjoining villages are also not advanced in this respect. So employment opportunities were very limited and most people had to be happy with small patches of land in addition to some rented-in land from the rich peasants.

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7. Vylder finds that " in general, however, employment rises with the introduction of the HYV technology and the concomitant switch to a new crop rotation ---------- " (Vylder, 1982: 90).

(iii) The growth of wage labourers in village 1 was further facilitated by the presence of SONATIA BAZAR, the largest paddy market place in the region, in its vicinity. Purchase and sale of paddy in bulk require a number of helping hands as a result, a good team of Koolees have made their employment secure in this market place. Most of these Koolees are from village 1. We found that many as 12 Koolees, including their Sardar, were almost permanently employed here from village 1. The very presence of these Koolees in these villages has a different kind of influence on the nature of the rural proletarianisation in this village. A number of trucks come from Dhaka, the capital, to pick up paddy/rice from this market place and this has increased the flow of information -------- political and otherwise.

But village 2, though flanked by a small market place, Hatshahar, cannot claim such employment benefit from it. Only one household was found to be employed as sweeper and a few others were working as Cobblers/barbers during our study period.

The level of employment and the amount of real wage indicates the extent of vulnerability and the standard of living of the ALHs. Our findings indicate a very low standard of living amongst the AWLs in both the village (the condition was more precarious in village 2). However, the average income of the ALHs was at least better than marginalised peasants who still clung to the land (see Chapter VII). Anyway, discussion on rural proletarianisation is bound to be incomplete, without an examination of the nature and level of employment and wages. So, let us turn to that.

EMPLOYMENT AND WAGES:

The nature and the level of employment and wages vary between these two villages. The threat of unemployment is much more pronounced in village 2 than in village 1. The level

TABLE 9.5

NO. OF DAYS EMPLOYED

Months	Days employed in a month				
	FA_1	SM_1	PM_2	MS_2	MF_2
BAISAKH	25	20	10	10	12
JAISTHA	25	25	12	12	15
ASHARH	28	27	26	26	26
SHRABAN	30	30	24	26	28
BHADRA	30	28	22	26	25
ASWIN	12	13	8	5	10
KARTIK	10	11	9	10	5
AGRAHAYAN	19	20	24	24	24
POUSH	28	25	24	28	30
MAGH	28	26	20	20	20
FALGUN	20	25	15	20	8
CHAITRA	15	20	9	15	10

FA, SM, PM, MS and MF indicates abbreviations of the names of household heads.

Suffix 1 indicates village 1

Suffix 2 indicates village 2

of employment varied seasonally in both villages. But the extent of variation was much lower in village 1 than in village 2. In village 1, the months of Aswin and Kartic appeared to be the leanest.[8] In other months, wage labourers get regular employment in the farms of rich peasants of this village or other adjoining villages. Since, three crops (paddy) were produced in this village, the employment opportunities were quite evenly spread. The nearby market place also offered some job opportunities for the wage labourers, mostly on a contract basis. But, even then there was unemployment and one could not claim that all members of the poorer groups had a job throughout the year. On an average, 30% of the labour days of the hired labourers remained unemployed and in the leanest months, this figure jumped out to as high as 60 to 70%. For some it was as high as 90%. Poush, Magh, Asharh and Sraban appeared to be the best months from the employment point of view.

Compared to village 1, village 2 experiences very wide variations in the level of employment. Since modern inputs did not enter in sufficient quantities in village 2, the cropping intensity was lower and so was the level of employment. It was found that in the months of Baisakh and Jaistha only 20% and 10% of the total labour days of AWL could be employed. Farmers of this village still cultivated mostly the traditional varieties and the cycle of employment followed the seasonal peaks and troughs in the demand for labour

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8. Bengali months roughtly coincide with the English months in the following manner:

Baisakh ——— April - May
Jaistha ——— May - June
Asharh ——— June - July
Shraban ——— July - August
Bhadra ——— August - September
Aswin ——— September - October
Kartic ——— October - November
Agrahayan ——— November - December
Poush ——— December - January
Magh ——— January - February
Falgun ——— February - March
Chaitra ——— March - April

By Baisakh, the removal of weeds from traditional paddy and jute fields is almost completed and by Jaistha there is even more drastic reduction in the demand for hired labour. Only 10% of the total labour force can manage some trifling agricultural work, mostly out of the fields. The level of employment starts increasing in the month of Asharh and reaches its highest (90%) in the month of Shraban. This is the busiest month of the year in this region.

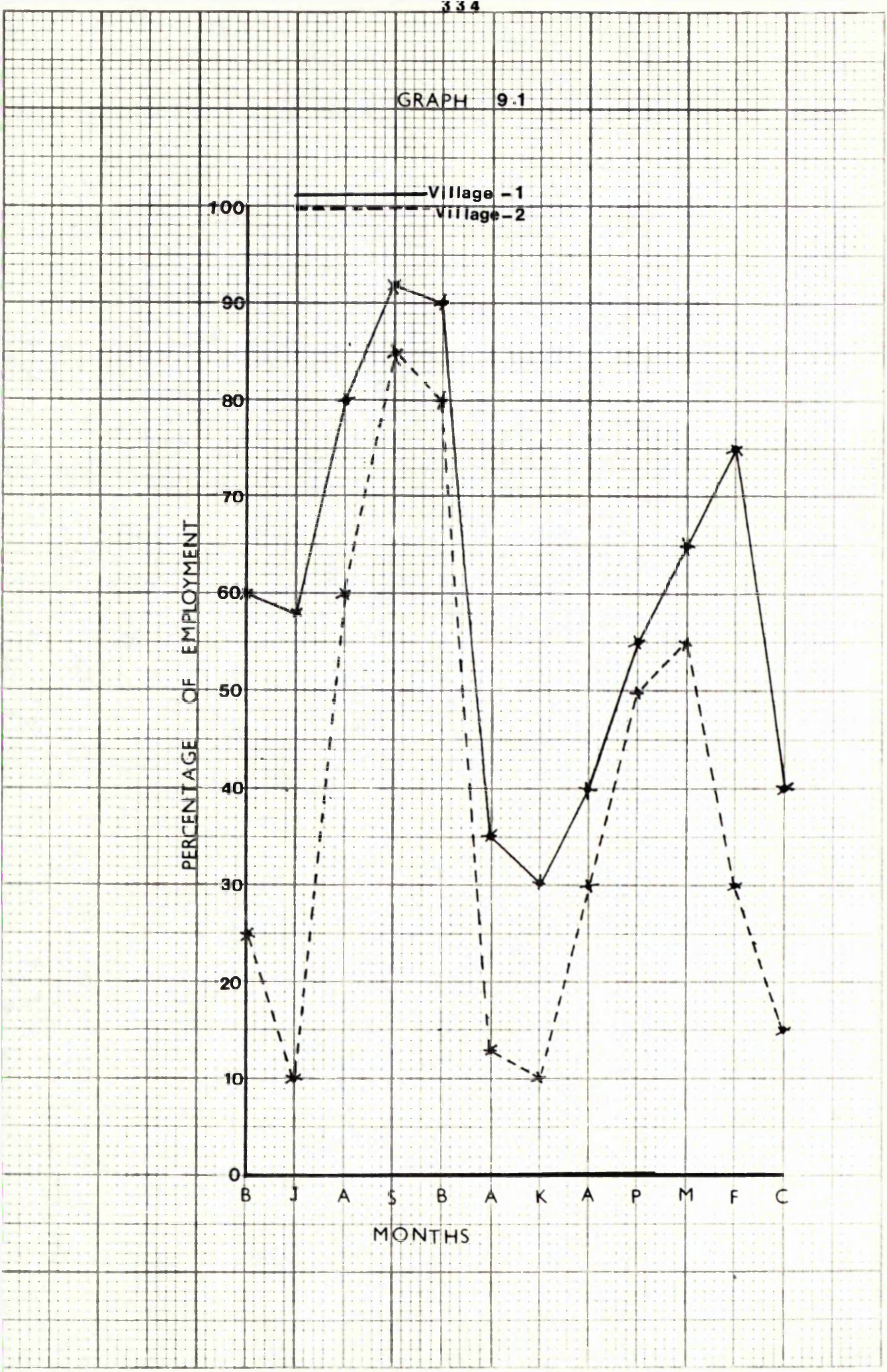
Cutting and washing of jute plants and fibres, transplantation of aman plants, drying of jute fibre and harvesting of aus paddy - all these activities coincide in this month. The level of employment begins to fall sharply in the month of Bhadra and falls to the bottom of 5% in the month of Kartic. The graph gives a better picture of the average variation in the levels of employment in village 1 and 2. Before the installation of power pumps in village 1, the pattern of employment of the agricultural workers was almost similar to that of village 2. Now the situation is better in village 1.

The average variations have been drawn from a sample of 20 AWL, 10 from each village.

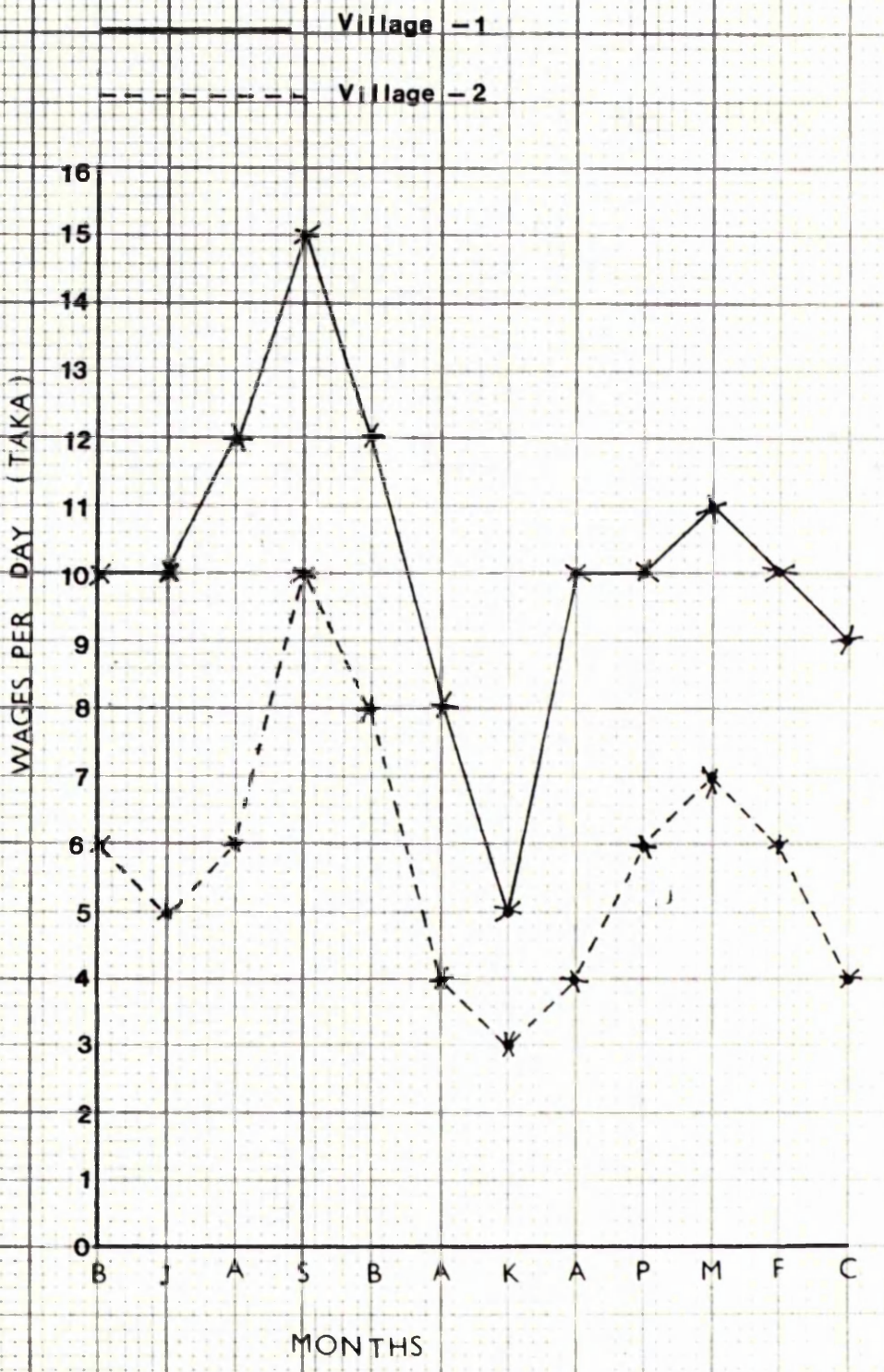
AWL, when unemployed in the farms, resort to various subsidiary professions such as petty trading, dealing in vegetables, biri, kerosene oil, salt and also small artisan jobs such as carpenter, barber, potter etc. A higher proportion of ALHs in village 2 were found to resort to these secondary off farm activities.

To obtain some feel for the level of employment, we conducted case studies in both villages and we found different levels of employment in different months. We present the employment situation of a number of AWL. We present case studies of four of them in the following table.

GRAPH 9.1


Village – 1
Village – 2
PERCENTAGE OF EMPLOYMENT
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
B J A S B A K A P M F C
MONTHS

GRAPH 9.2


Village – 1
Village – 2
WAGES PER DAY (TAKA)
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0
B J A S B A K A P M F C
MONTHS

The employment pattern, in a way, dictates the level of wages in rural Bangladesh. As the level of employment rises in the months of Asharh, Sraban, Poush and Magh, the level of wage also rises. The wage rate varied more sharply in village 2 as employment opportunities were scarce in this village. At the peak season, the average wage (with food) reached taka 10/- in village 2 and taka 16/- in village 1. The average wage rate in village 1 hovered around taka 10.00 in most of the months (excepting in Aswin/Kartic when it came down to as low as taka 5.00). But in village 2, the wage rate was very unstable and varied between taka 3.00 to taka 8.00 in most of the months. The average wage in village 1 was something around taka 10.00 where as in village 2 it was around taka 6.00. Monthly variations in the wage levels are given in the graph.

The graph on wages clearly indicates the seasonal variations in both villages, and that the overall situation is mush worse in village 2.

The situation is made even worse by the upward movement in the price of rice. The price of rice, as we have seen in our study villages, is lowest in the month of Sraban, Poush and Magh - the harvesting seasons for paddy. But around these months, both employment and wages are at a relatively higher level. In the months of Aswin, Kartic and Chaitra, the level of employment and wages are very low but the price of rice is very high as most farmers turn to the market for food during this time of the year. As a result, the real wage of AWL is reduced and makes his life very difficult.

In an inter-temporal sense also, the real wage of an average AWL has been reduced. But the decline has been higher in village 2. If we compare the rice equivalent of wages in our study villages with other studies, we get a clear trend of downward movement in the real wage of an average worker.

Siddiqui (1980(b): 188) calculated taka .50 and taka 4.50 as the average wage per day in rural Bangladesh in 1951 and 1977 respectively. He also converted these monetary figures into rice equivalent and found that an average wage labourer received wage equivalent to 2.60 lbs of rice but this has reduced to 1.80 lbs by 1977. When we converted our findings, we found that an average AWL received 1.60 lbs in village 1 and 1.20 lbs in village 2 as daily wage. There was a clear downward movement in the real wage of the AGLs. Khan (1979: 408) in a separate study also found such a declining trend.

MODE OF PAYMENT:

Mode of payment of the wage for the AWLs has, however, changed drastically. Even in the late sixties, village elders recalled that a part of the wage (especially of the permanent labourers) used to be paid in kind (mostly paddy, rice, clothes etc). But during our fieldstudy we noticed no payment in kind in either of the villages. Wages were usually paid in cash on the market days. Normally, a hirer would sell the paddy in the market and pay the wages in cash. One can say that wage relations have become monetized and hence purified.

FROM 'BONDED' TO 'FREE' LABOUR:

As we have noted earlier, even while wage labour is growing, one cannot conclusively say that proletarianisation is proceeding apace. An important additional criterion for proletarianisation is the shift from 'bonded' to 'free' labour.

We observed that semi-patriarchal and semi- bonded forms of hired labour were on the decline in rural Bangladesh. The AWLs in Bangladesh have as a whole experienced some changes in the nature of their 'captivity'. Although still bounded by moneylending, factional ties to some extent, there has been some movement towards a freer kind of relationship, away from the age old 'bonded' ones. The emerging relationship is between hirers and the hired, a commercial transaction for the purchase and sale of labour power. This is especially

true in those areas where there has been some development of productive forces, say for example, our village 1. From our own field experience we found that labourers in village 1 are in a much freer and flexible position that those in village 2.

One of the reasons for such a situation was the relatively better employment opportunities in village 1 arising out of HYV technology and the presence of Sonatia Bazar nearby where a number of landless labourers work as Koolees. Also a number of marginal farmers work as petty traders on the market days. In the lean seasons, the AWLs bring firewood from nearby Madhupur jungle and sell it in the market. The labourers of village 1 are relatively better off economically compared to those in village 2.

The employment situation in village 2 is indeed worse. It has been tradionally a backward village with little development of the productive forces. Most of the poor peasants are dependent on the richer households for tenancy, credit, mortgage etc. The adjoining villages are also not developed enough to attract surplus labourers from this village. In addition, twenty more destitute families came from another district in 1971 to swell the ranks of the landless. In the face of acute unemployment and economic insecurity, it is obvious that most of the landless and land-poor peasant households have accepted their 'captive' position as inevitable. As a result the rich peasants were seen to dictate wage rates and the terms and conditions of employment to their advantage in this village.

That the dependent relationships of the AWLs in village 2 were more tight was also manifested by the incidence of extra-economic pressures imposed on them by the rich. We interviewed a small sample of 29 AWLs in village 2 and out of them 18 (i.e. 62.06% admitted having done one or more of the followings:

(i) Having given free services to the landowners;

(ii) Having allowed their women and children to perform free services for the landowners (e.g. rice husking, looking after the cows, helping in the kitchen etc.);

(iii) Having supported the rich landowners in factional politics, especially in Salish (village court).

(iv) Having voted in the elections according to the dictates of the rich landowners;

(v) Having given false witnesses on behalf of the rich peasants in suits involving land or any other local disputes;

(vi) Having been employed by the same landowner for a long period.

But we found AWLs of village 1 more confident and defiant. Out of a small sample of 35 AWLs we could identify only 8 (i.e. 22.85%) who had done one or more of the above. In fact, we noticed a few other trends of disintegration of traditional values such as unquestionable loyalty to the village elders and respect for the extended family in village 1. Many elder heads of the households complained to us that the traditional family bonds were crumbling and more and more young people were beginning to face life more independently then before. The subservient attitude usually common in the poor, even a decade ago, was gradually disappearing in village 1. As a mark of defiance, the landless hired labourers, were always seen to behave quite arrogantly in the Salish bench and did not always agree to what the Matbars thought right. Some of the AWLs have bought radios and they would take them in the field to show off their newly acquired assets to others, particularly the rich. This was also a mark of defiance to richer households. They were also found to say 'no' to a landowner when offered a job if they did not like him.

PEREGRINATION:

The extent of their 'captivity' was further accentuated by the lack of mobility in village 2 by comparison with village 1. However, mobility in village 1 should not be over exaggerated. Only a handful of the AWLs have actually gone out of their village to seek employment during our study period. Some have gone all the way to Dhaka to seek employment. But a higher proportion of them showed an attitude which could be taken as readiness to move out if an employment opportunity was assured.

When asked those 35 AWLs in village 1, if they were ready to go out of their village if offered a better job in some other areas, leaving behind their families and small patches of land, 27 of them replied yes. Only 4 of them said'no.' The rest were indifferent. Compared to village 1, when we asked the same question to 29 AWLs of village 2, only 7 of them replied 'yes'. This was again a reflection of the attitude towards 'captivity'[9]. The AWLs in village 2 were skeptical about job opportunities and had very little idea about the outside world. In a remote village like this, with little job opportunities around, it was quite natural that the relations between landowners and the agricultural labourers were viewed in more traditional terms reinforcing the principle of community 'interdependence' and 'solidarity' for servival. And in most cases such relationships were advantageous to the employers.

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9. Lenin calls this tendency 'peregrination' and says "It destroys bonded forms of hire and labour service" (Lenin, 1977a: 252).

DECLINING PERMANENT LABOUR:

Yet another manifestation of the 'bonded' nature of employment was the 'permanent employment' policy. Unlike casual labourers, the permanently employed labourers, though assured of job for a certain specified period, could not be called 'free' in any real sense of the term. As a rule they had to be more obedient to the employers and had to participate in many activities which they might not like by themselves, not to speak of unlimited hours of work. If employed in the house of local level leaders, they had to be even more loyal to them as they had the powers to 'command respect'. Even a decade back, the permanent labourers were almost semi-serf. They could not change their employers whenever they liked. Mostly tied by some kind of credit relations, they had to work year after year without any increase in wages. The rural power structure as a whole would defend the exploitative landowners in this policy. There were many instances in which although a permanent labourer found employment at a higher wage rate in another village he was forced to leave that job and join the former employer. But the situation appeared to have improved as regards this employment of permanent labourers. Now permanent labourers were being contracted for shorter periods (say on a monthly or a quarterly basis rather than yearly) and they were free to choose their employers. This trend is greater in village 1 than in village 2. The proportion of permanently employed labour days compared to the casual labour days has been declining in both the villages we studied. At the moment, the proportion is higher in village 2 than in village 1.

In village 1, the proportion of permanently employed labour days to the total labour days employed (family + hired) was about one quarter. The proportion was higher in village 2 (abour one third).

On the whole we found that the extent of 'bonded' labour was declining in our two Bangladesh villages and the rate of this decline was higher in the villages which was more exposed to modernisation and commercialization in comparison to the backward interior village.

So far we have concentrated on the structural or class-in-itself changes which we have observed in our study villages. But an analysis of rural proletarianisation cannot be complete unless we look into the class-for-itself changes. Data on class consciousness and class-action are extremely difficult to obtain. Moreover, there was no significant national or political movement during out study period which could have unfolded many of the class-for-itself attitudes amongst both rich and poor peasantry. Even then we have noted a number of day to day incidents and social confrontations which pointed out certain kind of class behaviour. But as is always the case, one cannot be absolutely conclusive about such trends. We have tried to gather as much information on this aspect of the proletarianisation, but we think our stay was not long enough to form a concrete opinion about the class-for-itself changes. By saying this, we do not want to minimise the significance of this aspect. We are aware of its significance. To get a feel of what we observed in the study villages, one may turn to the Appendix C, where we have presented some evidence of class consciousness of the rural proletariats.

PARTIAL PROLETARIANISATION:

The emerging proletariats which we have observed are in fact not fully proletarianised. The dependent relationship arising out of the land tenure system, lack of employment opportunities, the age-old community ideologies etc. was still very active in keeping them as yet old 'proto ' or 'partial' proletariat. The extent of proletarianisation was observed to be higher in villages where the productive forces developed to a certain level (see Partha Sarathy, 1978, Byres, 1981).

CHAPTER X

THE STATE AND THE PEASANTRY

So far, in exploring the differentiation of the peasantry, we have been pre-occupied with the material elements of production and the socio-economic relationships that bind them. But our treatment would be incomplete without some consideration of the role of the state with respect to differentiation.

In the specific context of Bangladesh, Siddiqui (1980 b) has made an elaborate investigation of the role of various non-economic factors vis-a-vis rural poverty (see especially his Chapter VII on Superstructure and Poverty). We are not, however, taking up all aspects of the superstructure in this chapter. We will only focus on the role of the state[1] (which has been touched upon by Siddiqui (1980 b) but not elaborated) in perpetuating ever increasing differences amongst various groups/classes of the rural households of Bangladesh. This has become essential for the simple fact that the state (both in terms of its policy making role and also the functions it executes through its apparatus) has been more pervasive and active in the day-to-day life of rural households in recent times. The state is not a neutral and benovolent arbiter, promoting the national interest in economic growth and maximising the whole-scale social welfare. It has firmly established itself as "an endogeneous element in the economy, an institution which reflects the underlying social forces and structure of production" (Griffin and Khan, 1978:302) .

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[1] While doing that we are able only to raise certain crucial issues, without investigating them in detail. A study of the nature and the role of the state, in this context, will constitute a full-scale thesis in its own right. But these issues are so important that they cannot be ignored in any treatment of differentiation of the peasantry.

It is in this context that we have taken the state as a protector of the interests of the dominant social forces, which are rooted in the structure of production.[2] In the Third World context, the state has become increasingly involved in the direct control and management of the economy (see Sobhan and Ahmed, 1980; Kitching, 1980; Westergard, 1980; Vylder, 1982; Harris, 1982). This has, as we shall see, strengthened the hand of the dominant classes, as they now manipulate state power and the state apparatus to perpetuate their economic and social domination over the rest of society.

2.

We note that:

> State encompasses more than government: it includes the executive, bureaucratic, legislative, judicial, coercive, and publicly controlled educational, media, trade unions, and party apparatus designed to protect national security, foster the conditions for capital accumulation, and maintain social control (Sandbrook, 1982: 77).

Marx and Engels, though, did not offer any conclusive definition of the state, they deal with the subject on a number of occasions and their notion of the state includes many of the above elements. In fact, they did not take up the issue of the state seriously until they had written the German Ideology (1845-46). In the German Ideology, Marx and Engels note that the state is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests (Marx and Engels, 1845-1846: 90; Jessop, op.cit. 12). In the same treatise they identify the emergence of the state with the rise of private property and refer to its control of the means of coercion and "often employ ostensive difinitions which offer a more or less complete list of institutions that comprise the state" (Jessop, op.cit.: 21). Thus, in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Marx identifies the French state as"(this) executive power, with its enormous bureaucratic and military organisation" (Marx, 1852: 185). Similarly Engels finds it as an organisation on a territorial basis, specialised coercive apparatus or force, taxation, administrative staff, and, as rule, political rights graded on the basis of property (Engels, 1884: 155-156; Jessop, op.cit. 21).

In that sense the state still persists as 'an instrument for the exploitation of the oppressed' as perceived by Engels[3] and later elaborated by Lenin[4]. However, there is always a danger of being mechanistic and ending up with a one-sided formulation of the role of the state.

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3. Engels sees the state as a product of society at a certain stage of development. In his view, society is entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself — facing irreconcilable antagonisms which it cannot dispel. But:

> In order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arising out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state (Engels, 1884: 326-327).

And in the Communist Manifesto Marx and Engels argue:

> The executive of modern state is but a committee for managing the common affaris of the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels, 1848: 486).

This committee does not sit idle but legalises and perpetuates the oppression of one class by another in the name of maintenance of 'order' and thereby moderating conflict. This aspect of social cohesion is not necessarily class reconciliation.

4. Lenin stresses that 'order' involves oppression of one class by another and the systematic denial of means of struggle to the oppressed class. And the state plays a vital role in this game. To quote Lenin:

> The monstrous oppression of the working people by the state, which is merging more and more with all-powerful capitalist associations, is becoming increasingly monstrous (Lenin, 1977b: 7).

Lenin emphasises in the same article that had it been possible to reconcile classes, the state would never have arisen nor been able to maintain itself.

Jessop is right in raising caution against falling into such a theoretical trap. Marx and Engels, as Jessop argues, "do not offer a systematic and coherent theory of the state based on any given casual principle or major theme" (Jessop, op.cit: 30). They adopted different approaches and arguments and did not themselves attempt any systematic analysis of it. They were concerned with the issue of the state when they were generally concerned with political class struggle and focussed on control of the state apparatus and its use in the repression of the dominated classes and/or the consolidation of the dominating classes (Jessop, op.cit: 25). So in that sens, each state demands treatment in its own terms, one must guard against treating all states in identical terms.

In recent times a number of scholars have given attention to the role of the state in the social formations of Third World countries (see for example, Alavi, 1973; Saul 1974; Leys, 1976: Ziemann and Lanzendorfer, 1977; Westergard, 1981; etc.). Much of the works in question is highly theoretical in nature and very few empirical analyses have been undertaken. Moreover, it is usually couched in general terms and does not specifically relate to the peasant question. These theoretical approaches have focussed the Third World specificities either in terms of post-colonial states — pointing out their previous status as colonies (the principal advocate here being Alavi) or as peripheral states — emphasising their complementary and subsidiary attachment to the world economy, or more precisely, world capitalism (Ziemann and Lanzendorfer being the principal protagonists in this side of the debate).

All these theoretical niceties however do not lead us far. We are seeking empirical evidence to explain the processes of differentiation of the peasantry[5]. One way to evaluate the role of the state in these processes is to find:

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[5] Goodman and Redclift (1981) have made an attempt to understand the effects of state intervention in the peasantry of Mexico and Brazil. But the Bangladesh peasantry is not in the same setting as the Latin-American peasantry. The situations differ historically, internationally and internally. The level of development also differs widely in the two cases.

(i) who are the beneficiaries of the state policies, in particular its development policies[6]?

(ii) how the state negotiates the processes of subsumption of labour to different forms of capital, including international finance capital?

From our field observation, we found that over the last decade, certainly state involvement has increased in all sectors of the Bangladesh economy. The peasantry, too, has experienved the involvement of the state at different degrees in different areas. The inflow of foreign assistance, under the active guidance of the World Bank (McNamara, 1982: Sobhan, 1981) in Bangladesh has only intensified that state intervention.

In this chapter we attempt to assess the magnitude of this state involvement in the name of development policies and indicate who have been its beneficiaries.

In Bangladesh, most modern inputs are procured and supplied by the state agencies. The private sector, though becoming prominent recently, has to follow the broad indications of state policy. In the context of the peasantry, we can, therefore, consider the expansion of the use of these modern inputs as indications of greater state involvement. The following table indicates the broad trend of the use of modern inputs.

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6. By development policies we mean the general orientation of a regime with respect to accumulation. In more concrete terms, these indicate how the agencies of the state seek to assign a balance between private and public property, market versus planning mechanism, centralized versus decentralized economic decisions making, coercion versus popular participation in the promotion of development goals - eg. agricultural development, industrialization, dependency, export, import, price control etc.

TABLE 10.1

USE OF MODERN INPUTS IN BANGLADESH AGRICULTURE:
1958-59 to 1978-79

ITEMS	1958/59	1964/65	1969/70	1972/73	1978/79
1. Use of chemical fertilizers (000 nutrient tons)	8.4	45.0	129.5	178.7	350.1
2. Area irrigated by different modern irrigation methods(000 acres)	32.8	131.4	816.4	1337.9	198.0
3. Percentage of cropped acreage under irrigation by mechanical means	0.2	0.5	2.5	4.9	12.0
4. Cropped area sown with improved seeds(000 acres)	38	657	2175	n.a.	7048
5. Institutional credit(million Taka)	50.6	97.9	195.6	322.3	1701.9

Sources: Hossain, 1977a:27; SFYP,1981:I-II; BBS, 1979;218-20;
Ministry of Finance: Bangladesh Economic Survey, 1980-81.

Table 10.1 gives us the broad trend in the increased use of modern inputs over the last two decades. In recent years the inflow of these inputs has increased further as the Bangladesh government put emphasis on rural development policies to increase food production (SFYP, 1980; World Bank, 1981). We may now pursue a detailed examination of these recent trends item by item.

1) IRRIGATION:

The increase in modern irrigation facilities has been significant in recent years, although somewhat uneven. The following table shows the trend:

TABLE 10.2

RECENT TRENDS IN IRRIGATION: 1977—1980

TYPE OF IRRIGATION	UNIT	FY77	FY78	FY79	FY80
1. Deep tube wells	000 wells	4.5	7.4	9.5	9.8
2. Shallow tube wells	000 wells	5.4	12.0	18.0	21.0
3. Low lift pumps	000 pumps	28.4	36.7	35.9	38.6
4. Land irrigated by minor irrigation facilities	in million acres	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.0
5. Area irrigated by major facilities	in million acres	.09	0.14	0.16	0.24

Sources: BADC, BWDB Annual Reports, 1977-78 to 1980-81; Statistical Pocket Book, 1979; World Bank, 1980.

Note: FY = Financial Year.

2. FERTILIZER:

Fertilizer consumption has grown rapidly in recent years, more than doubling since financial year (FY) 1973. The off-takes for FY 77, 78, 79 and 80 were respectively 516, 715, 734 and 842 thousand tons (sources: as table 10.2; see also Vylder, op cit: 20).

3. IMPROVED SEEDS:

Where as BADC distributed only 152 thousand pounds of improved seeds in 1978-79, the figure jumped to 541 thousand pounds in 1979-80 and to 1263 thousand pounds in 1980-81. (Source: as above).

4. INSTITUTIONAL RURAL CREDIT:

The Bangladesh government has been giving special emphasis to the rural credit programmes. Besides specialised Banks, most of the commercial banks have been recently involved in rural credit distribution.

Table 10.3 gives the trend.

TABLE 10.3

RECENT TREND IN INSTITUTIONAL RURAL CREDIT IN BANGLADESH

YEARS	Total rural credit by all institutions(in million Taka)
1973-74	341.8
1974-75	366.9
1975-76	462.9
1976-77	886.4
1977-78	1068.4
1978-79	1707.3
1979-80	2683.9
1980-81	3522.8

Source: Bangladesh Bank Annual Reports: 1973-74 to1980-81.

5. TRACTORS:

In 1970, there were 2072 tractors of about 85 horse power on an average; 1657 in the private sector and 415 in the government sector (Bangladesh Agriculture in Statistics, 1973: 62). The Agricultural Census, 1977 reports the number of tractors as 3,454, and the number of power illers as 1,738.

The figures given above show a marked improvement in the quantity of modern inputs flowing into the agricultural sector. The major portion of these inputs are distributed by sepcific agencies. Although involvement of the private sector has increased in recent years[7] the involvement of the state remains significantly high.

To play its part, the state has reoriented its executive branches and a sizeable part of its administrative structure is now directly involved in 'rural development' activities.

A major vehicle of dissemination of modern inputs has been the banking system. In recent years branches of state controlled commercial and development banks have expanded significantly and a sizeable number of them have been opened in the rural areas. In addition, the Central Bank has sponsored rural banking projects in different districts on experimental basis.

The following table gives an indication of the speed of expansion of bank branches:

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7 See, for example, Box 5.6 entitled 'Private Compliments Public: The Bangladesh experiment' in The World Development Report (fifth) World Bank, 1982.

TABLE 10.4

BANK BRANCHES IN OPERATION: 1976/77 - 1979/80

Division/District	1976/77	1977/78	1978/79	1979/80
Rajshahi	431	632	731	853
Dinajpur	64	93	112	127
Rangpur	104	134	163	195
Bogra	74	112	130	145
Rajshahi	118	181	198	230
Pabna	71	112	128	156
Khulna	356	493	604	677
Kushtia	53	76	95	107
Jessore	74	107	145	167
Khulna	114	146	179	196
Barisal	80	120	138	155
Patukhali	35	44	47	52
Dhaka	640	812	991	1,116
Jamalpur*	-	-	-	58
Mymensingh	119	156	195	138
Tangail	30	41	64	81
Dhaka	413	518	616	695
Faridpur	78	97	116	144
Chittagong	638	820	932	1,039
Sylhet	171	222	258	284
Comilla	136	182	218	248
Noakhali	102	127	139	157
Chittagong	205	260	281	305
Chittagong Hill Tracts	24	29	36	45
TOTAL	2,065	2,757	3,258	3,685

NOTE: Table includes all branches of scheduled commercial banks and specialized financial institutions.

* Jamalpur was part of Mymensingh district up to 1978/1979.

SOURCE: Bangladesh Bank and Ministry of Finance, GOBD, Bangladesh Economic Survey, 1980-83, World Bank (1981a).

As the use of modern inputs has increased, so the involvement of the state in agricultural development has also increased. This is indicated by the many-fold increase in the cost of development administration. The state apparatus has not only expanded its traditional major bureaucratic appendices (for example, police, government employees for filing work, military etc.), but it has also created many new departments like Integrated Rural Development (IRDP), the Rural Electrification Board, Handloom Board, Rural Development Board etc. Departments like the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Boards (BWB), the Power Development Boards (PDB) and many other regional development authorities have also expanded their activities. Several new rural institutions, incldding the short lived Gram Sarkers, Youth Complex, various forms of co-operatives have also been created in recent years. All these have caused a phenomenal growth in the level of expenditure incurred on administration (See table 10.5).

TABLE 10.5

GROWTH IN THE EXPENDITURE ON ADMINISTRATION: 1972-73 to 1980-81

YEARS	Expenditure(at 1972/73 factor cost) in million Taka	Increase in index numbers (1972-73=100)	% of GDP
1972-73	1321	100.00	2.61
1974-75	2462	186.37	4.86
1976-77	3033	229.59	3.37
1977-78	3361	254.43	5.47
1978-79	3663	277.29	5.78
1979-80	3943	298.48	6.02
1980-81(Estimated)	4245	321.35	6.02

Source: Bangladesh Economic Survey, 1980-81:3.

The inflow of state resources into the rural sector in recent years has brought with it,as we shall see, more tensions and inequalities amongst the peasantry. The rich peasants dominate the various institutions/committees/ organisations through which government assistance is channelled. And they are in a position to appropriate most of the resources in connivance with the bureaucrats and the ruling elites. The ruling elites depend on the rich peasants for mobilizing the peasantry for their political ends. The rural rich can exercise political power in the villages because of their economic domination and the relations of dependency which they have enforced on the rural poor over the years. In return:

> The rich peasants depend upon the state to provide modernising inputs to enable them to make their holdings more productive. They also seek to intermediate the flow of these inputs to smaller farmers so that surplus can be extracted from this class. State resources are thus used as instruments of dependency which keep the rural poor in bondage to the rich peasants. Within this category, one may include traders who may be rich peasants, or if not, who have a basic identity of interest with the rich peasant.
>
> The rich peasant sees an expanding state sector as beneficial to himself in that it increases the volume of resources and instruments of control over the poor, available to him. He, in turn, depends on the state bureaucracy to protect him from the consequencies of his exploitation.
>
> At the same time he cultivates the local state agents of development to retain his monopoly over inputs and to use their extension services to increase his productive potential (Sobhan and Ahmed 1980:9-10).

In other words the rural rich acquire political power relations from their prior advantageous economic relations and use these political power relations "not only to maintain existing economic relations but also to acquire further economic resources originating from the urban sector/beyond the national

boundaries[8]" (Siddiqui, 1980: 214-215).

In our study villages, when we examined the distribution of modern inputs we found that rich peasants had grabbed the major share (see table 7.10). This was possible because of their domination of most of the rural institutions through which these inputs were distributed.

We shall consider this interaction of political power relations and economic advancement of the rural rich by looking at the following aspects of the Bangladesh state with particular reference to our study villages:

I. EFFECTS OF THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT POLICIES ON THE PEASANTRY:

We shall examine the following major development policies:

(i) Land reform programmes.

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[8] By "beyond the national boundary" Siddiqui must have meant the resources coming in the form of foreign aid. Foreign aid constituted 13.0% of GDP and 79.4% of the development budget in 1979-80 and has a pervasive impact on the nature of development processes in Bangladesh with all their after effects. In Sobhan's words:

> "Aid is no longer an instrument which only touches the lives of a narrow class of the bourgeoisie. A new aid - enriched class drawn from the ranks of the bourgeoisie and rich farmers may be its immediate and most successful beneficiaries and may well use aid to build themselves up as a class within the polity. But the tentacles of aid now run deep into the society with a wider spectrum of the population, many of whom have considerable political muscle, now acquiring a vested interest in the continuation of the aid regime." (Sobhan, 1981: 39; see also Sobhan, 1982)

(ii) Integrated rural development programmes (IRDP) and policies related to other rural institutions, eg., Union Parishad, Co-operatives etc.

(iii) Agricultural taxation policy.

(iv) Food procurement policy.

(v) Manpower export and education policy.

2. EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTING MACHINARY:

We will specifically look into the operation of the bureaucracy - and law enforcing agency (police) - and their impact on the processes of differentiation of the peasantry.

1. EFFECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES:

Ostensibely, the central theme of most development policies announced by the Bangladesh government has always been addressed to the reduction of poverty and inequality especially in rural areas (see FFYP, 1973-78: TYP, 1978-80; SEYP 1980-85). But, as we shall see, in the end , all these policies have further accentuated the state of inequality and more people have been thrown off the land to join the ranks of the rural poor. Let us consider a few of these major policies to substantiate this claim.

(i) LAND REFORM PROGRAMMES:

From the macro point of view, we have already examined the major land reform programmes - their conception and implementation in chapter IV. The pronounced "egalitarian" objectives of these land reform acts fell short of the requirements and the effect could not be but ephemeral as it did not attack the problem of inequality at source. Even the minimum potential embodied in these programmes could not be realised because of the weakness of the implementation processes. After investigating a number of villages Siddiqui (1980c) came to the conclusion that " the scope of

past land reforms legislations was extremely limited so that there was very little to be implemented. For example, the 33.3 acres/ family ceiling was disproportionately higher than the man-land ratio whether in 1950 or in 1972, and hence, land for redistribution from such ceiling limit was bound to be extremely meagre. However, even the little that was to be implemented went, by and large, unimplemented (Siddiqui, 1980c: 71)".

In our study villages as well we did not notice any attempt to implement the existing land reform programmes. The target group of these much publicised programmes, the landless peasants, had a very low opinion of the sincerity of the government as regards their implementation.

The post-liberation land reform programmes envisage the distribution of Khas (owned by government)land amongst the landless and near landless peasants. But our investigation revealed that Khas land in both the villages was still under illegal occupation of rich peasants, especially those who were well connected with the local revenue officials.

In village 1, for example, the names of the landless peasants were listed twice over the past ten years. They were given the false hope that Khas land and excess (over the maximum ceiling) land would be distributed amongst them. But in reality that hope never materialised.

Their names were first listed in 1975-76. They had to pay taka 5/- each to the local Union Parishad (U.P.) member to get the forms. They paid another taka 10/- each to the said member for getting their forms attested by the Circle Officer (Revenue)[9]. Each of the applicants paid taka 25/- to the C.O. (Rev)

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9 Thana level revenue official (normally knows as C.O.(Rev).

when he came to the nearby Tahsil Office (Revenue Office) to investigate their cases. The same U.P. member collected the money. This time with the calim that the C.O. (Rev) demanded Salami from them. Later the local Tahsilder[10] charged taka 50/- from each of the applicants for preparing documents. After a few months a magistrate come to the locality. The landless peasants were asked to assemble again in front of the Tahsil office, only to hear nice words of hope.

The U.P. member in question charged another taka 24/- from each of them as Nazrana of the Magistrate. Subsequently, they were given notice to be present on a certain day in the Tahsil office when another high official visited them. This time they were asked to pay taka 100. The landless and near landless households sold their last resources (for example, chickens, goats, untensils etc.) and paid the money to the U.P. member and local officials in the hope that they would get some land. But that hope never materialised. The Khas land remained with the rich peasants, this time made legal in the name of their relations (fictitious landless).

There was another attempt to list the names of the landless households again in June 1981. This time Gram Sarkar Prodhan was asked to do the unpleasant job. He being aware of what happened last time, declined to do this. The U.P. chairman intervened and told him to collect taka 2/- initially for each form rather than taka 5/-. Even then, most of the landless households did not show enough interest in this so-called distribution of Khas land. The Gram Sarkar Prodhan tried hard to get these households involved in the programmes but failed. The landless households no longer believed that government was serious about a land reform programme in rural Bangladesh.

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10 The Union level revenue official (usually known as Nayeb Sahib).

In the absence of any meaningful and deliberate attempts at land reform, as we have seen, the process of land concentration has been going on unabated in rural Bangladesh.

(ii) INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 'IRDP) AND OTHER RURAL INSTITUTIONS:

The Integrated Rural Development programme (IRDP) is a credit programme run by village co-operatives. The essential structure of this programme consists of:

(1) The primary co-operatives (KSS) located within the villages and organised by the farmers themselves.

(2) The primary co-operatives which are federated at the thana level (TCCA). TCCA not only co-ordinates the credit procurement from apex and distribution amongst the village co-operatives but also trains farmers to acquire productive and managerial skills.

The programme puts special emphasis at least in paper, on the small and medium farmers who are given credit tied to productive activity through supply of inputs. This model of co-operatives was first developed by Pakistan Academy for Rural Development in Comilla (hence the name Comilla model) in the 1960s. By the 1970s, the government of Bangladesh planned to replicate the experiences of the Comilla Model throughout the country. By 1980, there were 39610 primary co-operatives spread over 267 thanas. The following tables show the trend in growth of IRDP TCCAs and KSSs between 1972 and 1980.

Since 1974, IRDP co-operatives were also directed to include landless members. By 1980, ther percentage of landless members remained as low as 8.14% (IRDP 1980).

TABLE 10.6

TREND OF GROWTH OF IRDP CO-OPERATIV ES : 1972 - 1980

YEAR	No. of TCCAs	Total No. of KSSs	KSS per TCCA
1972	33	5630	172
1973	87	10171	117
1974	152	14690	97
1975	161	17691	110
1976	162	18975	117
1977	200	21874	109
1978	250	27548	110
1979	250	33511	134
1980	267	39610	148

Source : Siddiqui, 1980d: 20

Note : Total number of Thanas = 473.

According to Siddiqui (1980d) this figure was inflated and the actual percentage of the landless members was not more than 5% in any case. Mere numerical representation does not, however, mean anything. Effectively, the landless and landpoor members can exert very little influence on the way the co-operatives are run. Many evaluations of this programme have reached the conclusion that large farmers have taken over IRDP (Jones, 1979; SIDA/ILO Report, 1974; Khan, 1979, Blair, 1978; Abdullah et al, 1974; Hamid and Rahman, 1977 and many B.A.R.D. Research Reports).

Steve Jones, evaluating the IRDP co-operatives in a southern district, notes:

> Large farmers obtain a disproportionate amount of credit (more than can be explained by their larger land holdings), contribute the smallest percentage of savings mobilised by the co-operatives, and are the biggest defaulters on loans. Such defaulting can effect the credit worthiness of the entire KSS and, therefore, can stop the smaller farmers who repay credit more punctually from receiving further credit (Steve Jones, 1979: 67).

Rich farmers had the power to infiltrate the co-operatives and finally turned them into "closed clubs of kulaks". In the assessment of the planning commission, "the entire structure of the co-operatives seem to have become dominated by rural elite .... in conspiracy with the urban rich", (GOBD 1974: 11 and 4). The second five year plan document (1980-85) also notes, "the Comilla type of co-operatives (KSS), implemented by IRDP has benefited its members who are relatively rich farmers. It could not adequately serve the marginal and landless farmers", (GOBD, 1980: XII - 95).

Hamid and Rahman, in their evaluation of two IRDP projects - one in Natore and the other in Gaibandha, both in North Bengal, came to the conclusion that the benefits of these co-operatives, if there be any, have largely gone into the pockets of the big farmers:

> The study demonstrates that, while in Natore and Gaibandha about 30% of co-operative farmers fall under the category of big farmers(having more than five acres of cultivable land of their own), almost all the executive committee members are surplus farmers ... (Hamid and Rahman, 1977:2).

Abdullah et al (1974: 15) made a bench mark survey of four villages and found that, members of the IRDP co-operatives owned an average of 4.2 acres of land (the non-member households of these villages owned 2.8 acres) and the functionaries (chairman, managers and model farmers) owned 6.16 acres as an average. In another paper, Abdullah et al (1976) claimed that 72 percent of all land belonging to the co-operative farmers was owned by the large farmers. Thana level co-operatives (TCCAs) were even more biased towards rich farmers (See table 10.7.

TABLE 10.7

AGRICULTURAL LANDOWNERSHIP PATTERN AMONG TCCA MANAGING COMMITTEE FUNCTIONARIES, 1980

LANDSIZE CLASS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
0	0	0
0 - 0.50	5	1.70
0.51-2.00	38	12.92
2.01-5.00	112	38.10
5.01 and above	139	47.28
ALL SIZE CLASS	294	100.00

Source: Siddiqui, K, 1980d:26. The study was based on a survey of 25 selected TCCAs by IRDP officials in October, 1980.

Table 10.7 shows that farmers with more than 5.00 acres of agricultural land constitute about half of the land of managing committee members (although they constitute only about 8% of the agricultural households of the entire country). Since the assessment was made by the TCCA members themselves, it will not be unrealistic to assume that the figure was a gross underestimation.

In any case, IRDP, one of the major rural development programmes, as we have seen, has only strenghtened the hands of the rich peasants.

We did not notice much of IRDP activity in our study villages. However, in village 1, we observed that a co-operative has been formed in and around a deep tube well supplied by the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation. The co-operative had a number of similarities with an IRDP co-operative.

A few rich and middle farmers pioneered this co-operative in 1975. They also included token members from the small farmers group. Total number of households involved were about 60 initially. They showed that they would water about 200 acres of land. Arfan Sarkar became the founder manager of this deep tube well co-operative. In the first year they cultivated 150 acres with the help of this deep tube well. The installation of the deep tube well was heavily subsidised by the government and they were charged a token price of only taka 65,000. The annual charge for hiring the DTW was only taka 1200/-. But the committee, mainly the manager, charged taka 450/-[11] per annum per acre for irrigation. The manager did not show any accounts to the general members. A section of the committee members protested against this. But the others supported the manager and the rebels had to leave the committee. A new set of more docile members have now been inducted into the committee.

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[11] In 1980, this was raised to taka 500/- per acre.

Since the majority of the commitee members were rich farmers and also related to the manager, they did not protest against the manager's way of handling the irrigation scheme. It was decided that the surplus generated out of the contributions after deducting the cost would be deposited in the bank. The money deposited would eventually be paid to the BADC to pay the price of the well.

Apparently, no-one knows what has been happening to the money collected so far. The manager himself gave us the following estimates of the income and cost involved in the scheme for the Boro Season of 1980.

INCOME

Total contribution @ 450/- per acre for watering 80 acres of land: 80 x 500 = Taka 40000.00.

EXPENDITURE:

Hiring charge of Deep Tube Well = TK 1200.00
Fuel (diesel) - 12 drums @ TK 1200 = TK 14400.00
Mobil - 16 gallons @ TK 96.00 = 1536.00
Lubricating oil = TK 1200.00
Salary of manager (per season TK 800.00) = TK 800
Drivers (2): 2 x 600 = TK 1200.00

TOTAL: = 20366.00

Surplus: TK 40,000.00 - TK 20366 = TK 19,664.
This amount was supposed to go to BADC as part payment of the well. But nothing has gone there. General members complained that the manager and his committee members have been sharing this surplus since the DTW has been installed. In addition they need not pay any money for watering their own land. It is not surprising that Arfan Sarkar has been increasing his size of land ownership almost every year. On the other hand, most small farmers found it extremely difficult to manage such a high amount of money for irrigating their small plots. They have been deprived

of the benefits of modern technology subsidised by the government. The officials of BADC were supposed to look into these malpractices. They, too, have been bribed and they did not bother to see who got the water.[12]

Thus efforts like IRDP and irrigation programmes of BADC have further strenthened the already advantageous economic position of the rural rich in the villages which we studied.

UNION PARISHAD:

The Union Parishad is the last tier of the administrative set up in Bangladesh. This is an elected body and co-ordinates the local level developmental and other activities (Rahman, 1981: 21-26). With the emphasis upon developing the rural institutions (FFYP and SFYP), the Union Parishads have in fact gained further importance. Although, with the brief intorduction of Gram Sarkers (willage government) the importance of Union Parishad was somewhat under threat; it has regained its structure as the Gram Sarkers have been abolished by the military government of General Ershad.

Union Parishads have traditionally been under the domination of the rural rich and almost all of those connected with this institution have gained economically and socially. Union Parishad leaders not only manage to appropriate a substantial portion of government resources (eg rural works programme, food for works programme, relief, rural credit, rural rationing system) that pass through them but also make some extra income by offering themselves as intermediaries

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12 Similar collaboration between rich farmers and government officials was also observed by another researcher, Jansen, who spent quite a long time in the rural areas of Bangladesh in the late 1970's:

cont'd...

to the villagers. They, being a part of the rural power structure, can easily reach the urban power structure and hence become contact men for police, revenue officials and all sorts of government officials involved in different developmental activities.

U.P. leaders get a good commission from the villagers for their roles as intermediaries and thus, inflate their socio-economic position.

In a failry widespread survey of 132 U.P. leaders in sixty unions of ten districts in 1978, we found that the majority of the U.P. leaders came from a rich farmer background and that most of them enhanced their landownership size during their tenure as U.P. leaders. The following table gives the details:

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footnote cont'd..

> A condition for getting a deep tube well in an area is that a co-operative has to be formed, and the co-operative has to apply to government for a deep tube well... The key persons in a co-operative are the chairman, the managers and the owner of the land where the deep tube well is sunk. In many cases one person can combine two or three of these positions. Generally, these are the biggest landowners in the area to be irrigated... Normally there is a great demand for deep tube wells in an area. The people in government at central and local levels are well aware of this situation, and exploit it to their advantage. It is not unusual that a large amount of bribes will have to be paid to them by the rich people who start the co-operative ... One important consequence of this way of acquiring a deep tube well is that linkages between urban and rural elites are strenthtened... The rich farmers who have had the expenses for the bribes inform the members of the co-operative of this, and demand compensation for providing water to others. A normal way to collect payment from the members is to demand 150 to 300 taka for irrigating one bigha of land or to ask for a certain percentage of the crops; 25% is common. In this way, the rich farmer(s) can more than recover their expenses and the water from the deep tube well becomes a major source of income... (Jansen, 1979: 73-74).

TABLE 10.8

LANDOWNERSHIP MATRIX OF UP LEADERS

Group Number	Landowning Groups (Acres)	No. of Up Leaders	% age of Total	Position of Up Leaders at the time of becoming Heads of Households				
				1 (00 acres)	2 (01-2.50 acres)	3 (2.51-7.50) acres	4 7.51-12.50 (acres)	5 12.51 + (acres)
1.	00	4	3.03	3	1	0	0	0
2.	.01-2.50	10	7.58	0	6	3	1	0
3.	2.51-7.50	39	29.55	1	6	24	6	2
4.	7.51-12.50	35	26.52	2	0	17	14	2
5.	12.51 +	44	33.33	1	1	2	7	33
All Groups		132	100.01	7	14	46	28	37

Source : Rahman, Atiur 1981 : 55.

The matrix above shows that about 60% of the U.P. leaders interviewed had more than 7.50 acres of land. Only 10% of the leaders came from a small farmer background. But all of these rich leaders were not originally rich farmers. At least 30% owned less than 7.50 acres of land when they became heads of households. Again, of those who gained land, 49.20% were elected for either two or more terms. Thus we found a direct correlation between the holding of the U.P. office and gaining land.

In our study village 1, we found ample proof of this trend. During president Ayub's regime, the late Osman Sarkar of this village was the chairman of the Union Council for two terms. When he first became chairman, he had virtually no standing as a landowner in this village as he was a government employee and did not stay in this village. But within a span of ten years he became one of the richest man in the village owning more than 12.5 acres of land and a double storied tin shed house. He acquired land from poor neighbours by dubious means and no-one could challenge him as he was at the apex of the local power structure. During his tenure as chairman he made many enemies and he was killed subsequently. But his family is still considered to be one of the richest in the village. His close association with the state apparatus made him rich.

When we examined the past and present land holding positions of two current U.P. members of village 1, we noticed a similar trend.

CASE 1: JAMIR UDDIN, U.P. MEMBER:

Jamir Uddin became a U.P. member in 1976 and in the last five years he has emerged as a rich and powerful rural leader. Besides his role as a U.P. member, he is also a seasonal trader involved in rice and jute trading. He gets

his capital from the local commercial bank as he is very friendly with the local bank manager. He is now a busy man. He supervises the rural works programme and distributes relief to the rural destitutes. And invariably, he gets a share of it. During our stay in the village, we found him organising the rural works programme just immediately before the beginning of the rainy season. Since the bulk of the rural works involves earth work, the rain helped him to hide the exact amount of earth that has been put on the road . The workers who worked in this project thought that at least 50% of the fund allocated for this project went straight into his pocket. He is also an influencial member of the managing committee that runs the local DTW (irrigation) scheme. He need not pay the normal price for watering his land under this scheme as he always defends the corrupt scheme manager. He, too, gets some share of the surplus emanating from the scheme.

He is very often called to the Salish to dispense justice in the event of any local dispute. As a Salish judge he takes bribes from both parties to the disputes.

About three years ago the sons of late Sobhan Mondal started a dispute over their father's land. This land was near the land of Jamir Uddin. There was a small fight amongst the brothers over that land. Jamir Uddin councelled one of brothers to launch a legal suit against his brothers. Jamir Uddin offered him money (of course in lieu of mortgaged land) and went to town to help him making the suit. The case dragged on for the two years after 1979. In the meantime, the sons of Sobhan Mondal sold about 2 acres of land to Jamir Uddin at a lower rate than the market price.

Jamir Uddin had 11 acres of land when he became the head of the household about ten years ago. Now he owns about 25 acres of land. And 90% of this excess land was acquired after he became the member of the Union Parishad, i.e. during the priod 1976-1981.

CASE 2: MONTAZ MEMBER:

Montaz, like Jamir Uddin has been a member of the Union Parishad for the last five years. Montaz was a small farmer in the 1960s. He used to steal wood from the nearby Madhupur jungle and supplied it to the Beparis of Jagnathgonj Ghat. In 1964 he suddenly brought home 100 bundles of c.i. sheets . People are still puzzled about this incident. He did not have sufficient money to buy the c.i. sheets . People suspect that he must either have stolen or hijacked it from some other people. He used a part of it to build his own house and sold the rest to buy land. After that he began to lend money to needy farmers at an exorbitant rate of interest with their land as collateral. The poor farmers could never repay that loan and, ultimately handed over the mortgaged lands to Montaz. By 1975, he had become a rich farmer and owned about 8 acres of land. His newly acquired land made him a powerful man in the village.

Many of his associates advised him to contest the 1976 Union Parishad election. He became a member. During five years of tenure as a U.P. member, a huge amount of government resources have poured into this village. And as expected, most of them went to Montaz and his close associates. By 1980, Montaz had already become the owner of 18 acres of land. And in village 1, 18 acres of agricultural land is indeed a lot of land, where the average land per household is only about half an acre. When interviewed, he felt his association with the state machine helped him gain land and power.

Besides IRDP and Union Parishad, all other smaller organisations like the school committee, the mosque committee, the jute Co-operatives and the like, were found to be dominated by the large farmers. The poor were hardly involved with those organisations that could attract some governmental resources to the village.

Not only did the rich farmers dominate the rural organisations, but they also had access to outside organisations, such as the Krishi Bank, the Police Station, the regional offices of the ruling party etc.located in the nearby towns. The rich farmers had also urban relations and they always used these connections to enhance their economic and social positions. We can present two case studies (both from village 1) which involved such connections.

CASE 3: DANESH SHUDKHOR[13]:

Danesh was lucky to have an uncle-in-law working in the local Krishi Bank (agricultural bank) in the nearby town. With his help, Deneshi borrowed taka 5,000 at an official interest rate of 5% in 1967. He invested taka 2000 in land and bought $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres of land. He gave the rest i.e. taka 3000 as loans to the needy villagers at the usurious rate of 100%. By the end of the year he received taka 6000 from his debtors. Next year he borrowed more money from the bank. This time he changed the system of money lending.

He bought paddy with that money. He loaned paddy instead of cash to the debtors. The debtors had to return two Maunds of rice if he took 1 Maund at the end of the cropping season. (i.e. after about 4 months). He could lend three times a year and get at least 300% rate of interest.

Danesh had virtually no land when he started this money lending with the support of the state sponsored credit. Now he owns about 10 acres of agricultural land.

13.

Shud Khor means one who lives on money lending.

CASE 4: AZIM UDDIN:

Azimuddin was a store keeper at a local BADC godown. He was in charge of the insecticides and diesel. At the beginning of 1974 he managed to steal 3 drums of insecticides (about 15 maunds). He told his superiors that there were holes in the drums and the insecticide leaked out of them. There was a real crisis of insecticide in the later part of this year. And he sold this insecticide in the black market at about tk 40,000/-. He bought paddy with that money. Village 1 witnessed the worst famine in 1974. Azimuddin started giving loans to the needy farmers at an approximate rate of interest of 100% per cropping season. He took land as the collateral. Many of the poor farmers repaid the money with interest. But others defaulted. And Azimuddin gave even more loans to the defaulters and thus forced the debtors to hand over their entire land. Azimuddin had only 3.5 acres of land in the mid sixties. By 1980, his sons had 15 acres of land (Azimuddin died in early 1980). His sons continued as money-lenders.

We could multiply such examples. The essential point is that an association with the state apparatus is always helpful in enhancing the economic position.

(iii) AGRICULTURAL TAXATION POLICY:

That the government is heavily dependent on the rich farmers is also clear from the failure of successive governments to introduce a progressive taxation system in the agricultural sector. Hossain et al (1978) and Siddiqui (1980b:424-427) have clearly demonstrated that despite an increase in the resource flow into the rural areas, there has been a fall in the real value of rural tax revenue. Table 10.9 gives an indication of the general tax structure prevailing in the 1970s in rural Bangladesh:

TABLE 10.9

Net Tax Burden on Agricultural Sector of Bangladesh: 1973-74 to 1976-77

Years	Total Direct Taxes (in m Taka)	Total Indirect Taxes (in m Taka)	Total Concealed Taxes (in m Taka)	Total Tax Burden (in m Taka	Total Public Expenditure (in m Taka)	Total Agricultural (in Taka)	Net Tax Burden	
							as % of total Agricultural Income	Per Capita (in Taka)
	1	2	3	4=(1+2+3)	5	6	7=($\frac{4-5}{6}$x10)	8
1973-74	56.30 (.13)	1057 (2.5)	30.65	1143.95	1570	41501	-1.27	-6.10
1974-75	88.20 (.11)	1824 (2.3)	397.27	2313.47	2005	78823	.38	+4.26
1975-76	170.20 (.29)	2481 (4.5)	-108.56	2542.64	3292	57339	-1.30	-10.23
1976-77	167.70 (.30)	2456 (4.6)	-136.67	2487.03	4133	533315	-3.08	-21.95

Sources: Hossain et al, 1978:22; Siddiqui, 1980b:426-430; GOBD, 179 (Tax Enquiry Committee'sReport).

Notes: i) Rural direct taxes include land revenue and agricultural income, the former accounting for about 90% of total rural direct taxes.

ii) Rural indirect taxes include taxes on all sales and exciseable items plus the UP taxes and local tolls.

iii) Concealed taxes include price support, subsidies,cesses, duties, development taxes etc.

As we can see from table 10.9, the net tax burden on the rural sector has fallen overtime . The figures have been arrived at after adjusting the concealed taxes with the total tax burden figures. In the last two or three years the subsidy and price support have been partially withdrawn. To this extent, the net burden of taxes must have increased a little recently. But compared to the increase in the agricultural income of rural households, due to the spread of the new technology, the burden is still either negative or minimal. As we have seen in Chapters VIII and IX, the beneficiaries of the new technology have been the large farmers. But they pay the least in terms of taxes (as evidenced in the ratios of direct tax to total agricultural income, as shown in the table. Neither the benefit principle nor the ability principle appears to be operating in the context of Bangladesh (see Hossain et al for an elaborate examination of this aspect of agricultural taxation in Bangladesh). Land taxes are still paid as fixed amount and in that way the rich peasantry gain. Compared to the direct taxes, we notice a greater increase in indirect taxes. Normally the burden of indirect tax is more on the poorer section of the population (See Hossain et al, 1978 for an estimation). Also the amount of U.P. taxes has increased at a higher rate in the recent years. Whereas collection of taxes, rates, fees and tolls by U.P. was 79.66 million taka in 1973-74, the amount increased to 182.40 million take in 1977-78. The increase in percentage terms was 129 over the base period. And as we shall see, the major share of these enhanced indirect taxes was borne by the poorer sections of the peasantry as they had little say in the decision making processes of the rural power structure. In addition to this, the procurement price of food has been set at a higher price than the market price and thus cancelling some of the concealed taxes which used to be imposed on the rich peasantry.

In our study villages, we found that the U.P. leaders had always been lenient to their fellow rich farmers and harsher on the poorer ones while deciding how much to charge as local government taxes. The poor peasants also complained that they had to pay more than the usual land tax to the local revenue officials as they would always charge some unexplained 'extras'. On a number of occasions, said one of our informants, in village 1, poor peasants had to pay taka 10/- although the revenue office gave them the receipts of taka 1 /-. The richer groups, being more powerful, can always challenge the revenue officials in such cases.

The rich farmers form the power bases of the ruling class. They not only form the 'votebank' for the ruling elites they can equally be stubborn in the face of any plea for paying higher amount of taxes. During our discussions with the rich farmers, we often pointed out to them that the government was supplying them subsidised inputs and now that their income has increased they should pay a higher amount of agricultural tax. But the rich farmers responded that any government was obliged to give such concession to them for its survival and they need not pay anything. 'The state needed them' - they said.

The policy makers are aware of this attitude of the rich farmers and they have been very careful in formulating any policy with regard to imposing higher agricultural taxes on the rich peasantry. This had always been a very sensitive issue and all governments hesitated to take any step in that direction. There were some attempts to pass a law in this regard, but the MPs of all parties had always opposed such a move unanimously.

An explanation of such an attitude amongst the policy makers has been given by Siddiqui (1980b: 440) and Jahan, 1976). Siddiqui has suggested that the majority of the MPs have rural interests despite their urban connection. Most of them were absentee landlords and depended on the rural rich to mobilise votes for them at election time. According to Siddiqui's calculation, 70.9% of the MPs in 1979 had at least 10.00 acres of agricultural land under their ownership. 16.3% of them reported their principal occupation as agriculture (according to a government statistic[14] the figure was 21.7%). The data suggest that the majority of them were abentee landowners and in most cases sharecropped out their land. It is quite natural that they would oppose any kind of direct taxation of the rural rich. The bureaucrats, too, especially at the lower echelons, are well connected with agriculture through extended family relationships and, at times, as absentee owners of land, and as such become natural allies of the rural rich (See Vylder, 1982: 13 for his emphasis on this point).

(iv) FOOD PROCUREMENT POLICY:

The government has been making attempts to procure food internally during the harvesting season, at a price higher than the market price. Besides using the bureaucratic machinery, government has also been trying to use local government leaders (U.P. leaders/Gram Sarker* leaders) to procure paddy and wheat. Government has also started establishing rural food storage to stock the procured rice. According to government policy, this would stabilize the prices of food and give farmers an incentive to produce more. But, as we have seen in our study villages and elsewhere, this programme has only benefited the rich farmers, in particular the trader-cum-leaders of the rural rich (see Rahman et al, 1982, for an exposition and evaluation of government policy with regard to procurement of paddy and wheat).

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14 See BBS, 1979: 34.

*Now defunct.

Poor peasants were unable to break the bureaucratic barrier and get near to the procurement centres.

In most of study tours we were told that local leaders were misusing government resources given to them to procure food in connivance with the bureaucracy[15]. In other words, the food procurement policy of government has become an extra bonus to the richer section of the peasantry.

(v) MANPOWER EXPORT POLICY:

Since the mid 1970s, labour migration from Bangladesh to the Middle East has been increasing rapidly (See World Bank, 1981: Staff Working Paper No. 454). Though the rate of migration is highest from three districts (i.e. Chittagong, Dhaka and Sylhet) most of the other districts are also not far behind. The increase in manpower export from Bangladesh (a predominant portion of them being from rural areas) is shown in the following table:

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[15] According to a newspaper report, a sum of taka 601.9 million was distributed amont 43520 members of U.P. and Gram Sarker in August 1980 under an official order of late President Ziaur Rahman. Each of the members were told to buy at least 500 maunds of paddy. A government circular was given to these member to furnish information about the exact amount of rice they procured. They gave written statements to the Thana administration. But by October 1981, it became clear that not even half of that sum has been utilized for procurement of paddy. They all furnished fictitious in formation. Govternment could not do much to regain this money. (See Ittefaq , 23rd March, 1982).

TABLE 10.10

SHARE OF REMITTANCE IN EXPORT AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS: 1975-76 to 1979-80

(In million Taka)

ITEMS	1975-76	1976-77	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80
1. Remittance from Bangladeshis working abroad	732.0 (11.65)	1910.5 (18.46)	2194.6 (23.41)	2678.7 (21.76)	3785.0 (28.25)
2. Export Earnings	5551.7 (88.35)	6670.1 (81.54)	7178.2 (76.59)	9637.0 (78.24)	9611.9 (71.75)
3. Total Foreign Exchange Earnings	6283.6 (100.00)	8180.6 (100.00)	9372.8 (100.00)	12315.7 (100.00)	13396.9 (100.00)

Source: Mahmood, R.A(1981), ' Immigrants' remittance as a source of foreign exchange— the Bangladesh Experiences', IDS, Sussex.

Note: Figures in parentheses represent column percentages

As we can see from table 10.10, the share of remittances in total foreign exchange earnings has been increasing quite rapidly over the last few years.

The impact of these remittances on the process of differentiation of the peasantry can be enormous. We did not come across any household in our study villages which has a migrant member abroad. But we observed a few households in adjoining villages who had some of their members in the Middle East. The huge amount of money sent by these migrant members created serious imbalances in the land market of the villages. Normally, only a rich farmer can afford to sent his son abroad. It cost a lot of money (not less than Tk. 30,000). So a middle or poor farmer cannot think of sending some-one abroad. Moreover, it needs good urban connections to strike a deal with the manpower recruiting agent.

The additional money pouring into the hands of the already landrich families in rural Bangladesh from abroad has further strengthened the rich families.[16] And they, in the absence of any other suitable avenues of investment, prefer to buy land from the poorer families. The land price in the areas from which a large number of migrant workers have gone to the Middle East has suddenly shot up and it has further accentuated the processes of land transfer from the poor to the rich households. It is felt by most villagers that the manpower export will have a significant depeasantising impact in the villages when more people go abroad for in the future.

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16 Osmani and Mahmud call them 'super rich':

> The inflow of remittance has thus led to the emergence of a new class of 'super rich' and has grossly exacerbated the existing problem of income inequality. The conclusion is fortified by the finding that the typical migrant does not belong to the poorest class of the society. (Osmani and Mahmud, 1980: 26)

(vi) EDUCATION POLICY:

Education is, in fact, a resource. Unless educated, once cannot think of making links with the outside world. The rich farmers in both of our study villages have sent their children to the educational institutions and some of the rich farmers have already enhanced their economic positions with the help of the money and power of their members residing in urban centres. From our findings, the level of education was found to be concentrated in the landrich groups. The poorer households cannot afford to send their sons and daughters to the educational institutions. They prefer to send their children to work at a very low age under tremendous economic pressure. In village 1, 80% of those who were educated at more than the secondary level came from households owning more than 5.00 acres of land. A similar trend was noticed in village 2. On the other hand, the majority of the 'dropouts' were from the poorer groups (see Saleh et al, 1979).

Thus the state resources flowing into the educational sector strenghtened the position of both the urban and rural rich.

From our investigation of the public policies so far, we have seen that they are biased towards the rural rich and create further inequalities amongst the already unequal rural households.

In addition to the inherent bias against the poorer groups, in these policies, the implementing machinery gives a further boost to the whole processes of making society more unequal. In order to try and understand the differentiating mechanism, we talked to three government officials who had direct interaction with the peasantry. Normally they would

not communicate openly. But given the assurances of their anonymity and the objective of our research, they at last gave us frank confessions about their own wealth and activities. The three officials were -:
(1) An officer in charge of a police station (OC), who originates from our village 1; (2) A circle officer in charge of the co-ordination of the development activities of a Thana (CO Dev) operating near our village 2; and (3) A Bank Manager, placed at the market place adjacent to our village 1. Their testimonies shed light upon the role of the state as an element accentuating differentiation of the peasantry.

We have chosen a Police Officer, because the police represent the protectors of law and order and work as the principal instrument of violence, mostly used by the ruling class on the others[17]. They are the most visible representatives of a coercive state. We chose a Circle Officer (Dev) because most of the developmental resources pass through him and he is the main contact point of the state. As we have noted, nationalised banks have expanded their branches into the rural areas and banks are playing an important role in distributing institional credit in the rural areas. So we selected a Bank Manager to give his version of banking activities.

(A) CONFESSION OF A POLICE OFFICER (OC):

"I am a very new officer and was given the charge of the police station only 6 months back. Before I was working as a second officer in another police station. My father used to work as a clerk in a semi-government office in Dhaka. He died about two years ago and I became the head of the household. My father left about 1.3 acres of land.

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[17] The police, as an organised force has traditionally been an ally of the rural rich and has always acted as their protector (see Chaterji, 1981, for the historical perspective).

During the last two years of service, I have doubled that amount and we have at the moment 2.6 acres of agricultural land. In addition to that I am supporting the educational and other expenses of the family. I have already given about tk33,000 in cash for that. In all, I have given my family tk.1,13,000 up till now. I have some savings and recently I got married. You can say I have earned about tk two lakh during the last two years. Now that I am an OC, I hope to earn more. I am very well placed now and my minimum income per month is taka 25,000. Some OCs earn even more than that.

There are different channels through which we get money. Since I am in charge of Feri ghat, I get straight tk.12,000 a month from the ghat alone. The rest of the money comes from different cases. To be honest, we police are friends of the rich. We cannot survive without middlemen. Normally Union Parishad Chairman/member, ex-members/Chairmen, businessmen etc. are our contact men. They are the people who bring cases and money for us. They too get the share. We also give certain percentages of our income to our superiors.

We are heavily biased against the poor. The poor can hardly come near to us. But influential rich farmers are smart enough to walk into our office and say hello (of course, with a packet of foreign cigarettes). They keep us up to date about the developments in their areas. Normally, we do not want to accept a case, however genuine that may look like. We simply will not entertain a case unless the petitioner pays us a lump sum. The contact men usually pay that money. We than proceed to catch the 'culprits'.

We normally apprehend a number of possible 'criminals'. Many a time we take extra money to catch extra men. Some people give us money to harass their factional opponents.

Then we take money from both parties. We take money from the petitioner promising a very strong final charge sheet against their opponent and we take money from the other party promising exactly the opposite. In the final analysis, we count money and weigh our comments accordingly. I understand many innocent people are victim of our power game and many of them lose wealth, land, prestige, everything. Let me give you an example of how a self-sufficient peasant became landless in about six months because of police intervention.

A owned 3 acres of land and B owned 4 acres of land. They were neighbours. One day A's cow trespassed B's land and spoiled his crops. B complained against A to the local Matbars (U.P.members). They did not solve the dispute. Next time B's cow went to A's field. He gave the cow to government Khoar[18] and B had to pay some fine to get his cow back. Next time when A's cow went to B's field both of them began to qurrel and at one point B hurt A with a piece of wood. The Matbars advised A to file a case against B. A came to me along with the local U.P. mamber (my contact man) and gave me tk 10,000 to accept the case. He (U.P. member) also requested me to apprehend a number of people who were relatives of B. I issued warrant against at least six of them and apprehended four. This time another headman who I knew very well came and offered me tk 700 so that my sepoys don't beat them. I accepted it. Then I was offered another tk 1000/- for not chasing the other two accused.

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[18] Animal's jail, where animals who trespass others crop fields are detained and released after a fine.

A was pressing for a favourable final charge sheet against B and his associates. I demanded tk 3000.00 for that. He sold a part of his land to my contact man (U.P. mamber) and gave me tk 25.00. I gave charge sheet against the 3 accused and let the others go (of course, after getting tk 3000). B has also sold a part of his land to the said headman.

The case is now in the magistrate's court. The lawyers, Chaprasis, Magistrates, U.P. members, Headmen - all of them are squeezing money from both parties. I would not be surprised if I find both of them either landless or very near to that position by next year. That is how we the law enforcing agency people can force some self-sufficient peasants to be paupers. This has been the practice of the police department traditionally and I am not an exception.

(B) CONFESSION OF A CO:

"I am 44 years old and I have been working as CO (Dev) for the last ten years. I am an MA and I am a bit more polite than many of my colleagues. That is my crime. I do not get promotion. I cannot make my superiors happy as I cannot take money from my clients in sufficient amount and pass a good share to my superiors. Even then I cannot keep my eyes closed. Money comes - may not be in bulk (as many of my colleagues boast of). I am a relatively poor CO. I have only constructed a two storied building in a district town and I am the owner of only 15 acres of land. My wife has 20 ounces of gold ornaments (an ounce costs about tk10000). My monthly salary is about tk 1250 and my monthly expenditure exceeds tk 5000. If I count the bribe, my monthly income is on an average of tk 10,000. It is not very difficult to get money.

My signature is very important. Nothing will get passed unless I put my signature. These days the Thana has become the focus of administration and I am the chief executive of thana. I co-ordinate the activities of at least 20 different departments and every department has to get my consent before they finally get a project passed. Normally I get the maximum money from the rural works programme and food for works programme. The plan submitted by the chairman of U.P. has to be forwarded by me. And once a project has been passed by the relevant ministry it has to be implemented under my supervision. So I am the keyman. The chairman gets the budget alright, but always leaves a certain percentage for me and the SDO (my superior officer). The very nature of the works programme is such that I can always raise an objection. So the chairman always keeps me happy. We don't give cash to the chairman. We always give in kind- wheat. The godown-man always gives the chairman 5% less than what we allot. The chairman has to accept it. He keeps certain percentage for himself. He has to give a share to the Thana project implementation officer, the project supervisor, my office clerk. Then he has to keep the mouths of local influentials shut. At the end of the day, I reckon not even 30% of the total budget reaches the village. The rural landless labourers sign the master rolls for say ten seers a day but get actually 2.5 seers. The chairman adjusts the account by that means. We all know this. But what can we do?

At the beginning of my career I used to be slightly embarrassed to take money directly from the chairmen. We used to get the money through our clerks. But nowadays we don't trust them either. We get it straight from the chairmen. Last year alone, I took about 85,000 tk cash from five chairmen.

The Chairmen know our weakness and they are, therefore, not afraid of bungling the government resources. The U.P. chairmen share this money with other influentials. You can say that the richer peasantry is the net beneficiary of the state sponsored development works".

(C) CONFESSION OF A BANK MANAGER:

"I have been here for the last three years. We started very modestly. Initially we had very little deposits. But many farmers are opening accounts. Medium and small farmers too are depositing quite a lot of money. But they do not get the credit. In most cases, the rich farmer cum trader gets overdraft facilities. I give short term loans to the local traders as well. They give me a part of the profit. I have given an overdra t amounting to half a million tk to an aratdar, even though he cannot get it if I strictly follow the banking principle. Why should I? I get a part of the profit as well.

Let me give an example of how agricultural credit is being misdirected. We have a special agricultural credit programme for the small farmers. A U.P. member took tk 2000 as credit in the name of a small farmer without even informing him. When a notice was given to that small farmer, he was simply shocked. He came straight to the bank. We understood what went wrong. We advised him to contact the local U.P. mamber. The U.P. member, himself being the culprit, charged another taka 100 from that poor fellow to settle the matter. And I knew very well what was happening".

When we closely examine these 'confessions', we can find how corrupt and unjust is the whole state apparatus of Bangladesh. Bribing an official for any job is now-a-days an accepted practice in Bangladesh. From our field investigation we noticed that out of 54 households who actually received institutional agricultural credit in village 1 from the local

banks, at least 17 of them (i.e. about one third) told us that they had to bribe the bank officials to draw the loans. Households with lower income and owned land had to pay more propritionately than their rich counterparts to get this loan.

About 60% of the households in village 1 complained that they had to bribe the land settlement officials who came to survey their land and finalize records of ownership of the land. The settlement officials took about 60,000 taka from village 1 alone in 1981 as bribe. The major part of this amount went from the poorer peasantry who always feel insecure and vulnerable in front of the government officials unlike the rich peasants. A few of the rich farmers became agents of the officials and earned a good amount during the settlement programmes. We saw poor peasants selling their last resources, like the only cow/goat and arranging cash to settle 'disputes'. In many cases the illiterate poor farmers were unnecessarily harassed for minor irregularities in tax payment. In others the rich and influential farmers influenced the settlement officials to put extra pressure on the poor peasant so that they could buy their land. And in most cases the poor peasants succumbed to such pressures.

In fine, we found most government officials directly connected with the villagers minting money in the name of providing services and resources to them. Generally they collected this extra money through their contacts (invariably rich and influential villagers). All these have made the already unequal asset ownership situation in the villages that we have studied even more unequal.

Most people in the villages are well aware of this close connection between the government officials and the rural rich. When we discussed this with the poor and the landless farmers on their own, they said unequivocally that the police and other

government officials were looking after the interests of the rich. Again when we sat down with the rich separately and asked their opinion they were much more diplomatic in their answer. They said the government officials looked after the interests of all villagers.

Poor household have no confidence in government offices and unless pushed to, they do not want to get involved with the administration. The SIDA/BIDS survey, on landless,[17] conducted in 1978 in ten different villages of Bangladesh, more than 71% of the respondents (215 out of 310 landless agricultural labourers) thought that the U.P. leaders mainly represented the rich and 79% of them (238 out of 310) said that the Thana officials represented the interests of either the rich or the government. We noticed similar apathy in the poor about the government in our study villages.

CONCLUSION:

So our field experience does not support the hypothesis that the state is neutral, as is often aserted. As we have seen in the foregoing, the structural effects of state intervention with respect to the peasantry in Bangladesh have only facilitated the continuation and consolidation of the domination of the poor by the rich. Indeed, the state has created new classes dependent on it for access to all kinds of subsidised inputs and 'developmental' allocations. The ruling class draws its main support from these classes for its survival. Even though some of the poor farmers may have genuinely benefited from the improvement in technology, poor peasants as class actually now hold less power vis-a-vis rich farmers (see flow chart 10i for a diagrametic expositon of the interdependence of the state and the rich peasantry). So on the whole we may argue that state intervention has actually helped enhance the accumulative power of the rich peasantry and the bureaucrats and extended their areas of exploitation. One can, therefore, conclude that the state in Bangladesh is negotiating the subsumption of labour to capital

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17 See Vylder, op.cit: 65. I was also co-researcher on this project.

and, in doing so, is actually stimulating increased social differentiation within rural households.

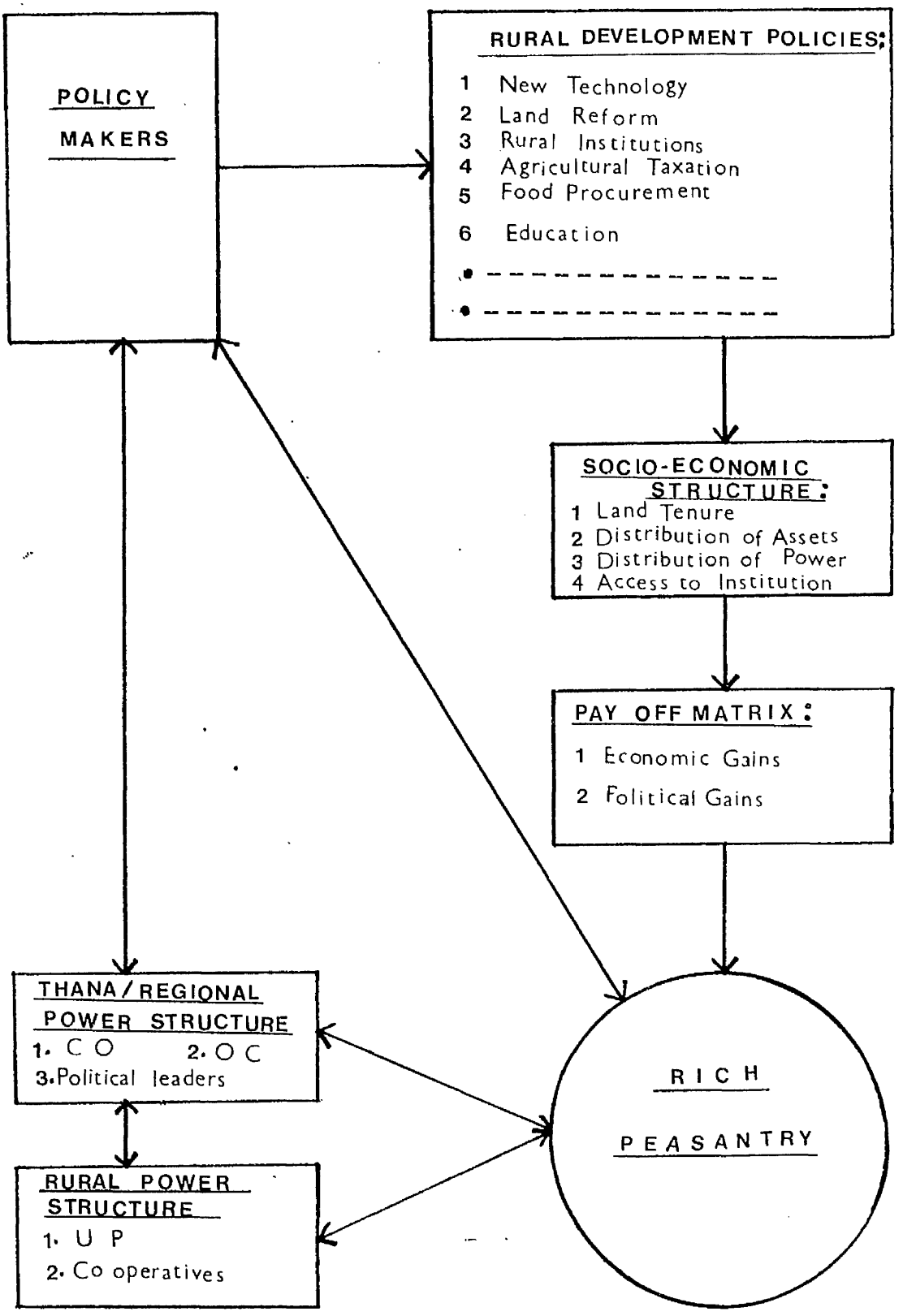


Figure 10.1 : THE POWER GAME

CHAPTER XI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

We can summarise the results of our investigation into the peasantry of Bangladesh as follows :

1. i) It is argued that the incidence of poverty and landlessness has increased amongst the vast majority of the rural population in Bangladesh during the last few decades. Simultaneously a handful of rich peasants have increased their wealth and power.

ii) There have been basically two points of view concerning the causes of such inequality. One group of scholars think that the demographic variables are the most crucial factors and consider the phenonmenon as temporary. If population growth can be halted, the processes which cause these differences will be of little significance. By asserting the primacy of demographic factors, this group rejects the presence of conflicting classes in rural Bangladesh. The other group, though they do not underestimate the importance of demographic factors, attempt to explain this inequality and poverty in terms of socio-economic relations.

iii) These contrasting views on agrarian changes in Bangladesh strikingly resemble the famous debate on differentiation of the peasantry in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th century.

2. The debate has deep historical roots. The populist and the latter day Neo-populist views on the peasantry were fiercely opposed by the Marxists. The two leading figures in the debate were Chayanov who was an advocate of demographic differentiation and Lenin, who emphasised social differentiation. The former believed that the differences within the Russian peasant economy were a purely temporary phenomenon and could be explained in terms of the growth and disintegration of family size. According to Chayanov , the peasantry was a homogeneous entity and showed extreme strength of survival. But the Marxists, and especially Lenin, viewed the Russian peasantry as highly differentiated and fragmented into conflicting classes arising out of the development of commodity production and the exploitation of labour. The debate went on well in the 1920s until it was suddenly halted by Stalin.

3. Both schools of thought introduced interesting methodological devices to prove their ideas empirically. They took the help of the Zemstvo Statistics available in Russia and also carried out their own empirical research. While Chayanov himself led the Production-Organisation School in rural research to test his ideas on demographic differentiation, Kritsman led the Agrarian Marxists of the time to test the primacy of class differentiation. The methodological developments witnessed in Russia while the debate was taking place can be of immense value to present day researchers attempting to understand the agrarian problems of Third World countries. The applicability of the debate can be tested by drawing the relevant hypotheses from it and then putting them to the test.

4. The attempt may be made at two levels : the macro and the micro. In this study we have first looked into the changes in the agrarian structure of Bangladesh from macro point of view. The macro view from the 1940s to 1980s reveals that the agrarian structure has been becoming increasingly unequal : resulting in a higher level of landlessness and pauperisation, while a few became more wealthy and powerful. The macro investigation is followed by micro level findings from two villages of Bangladesh. Village-1 is from more fertile East Bengal, which has already witnessed 'the drive for modernisation'. Village-2 is in North Bengal. It is a typical, backward village with no access to modern agricultural inputs.

5. Our data from both the villages did not lend support to the Chayanovian notion of a homogeneous peasantry. We did not get any consistent correlation between family size and landholding size as expected by the Chayanovian view. Nor did we get any positive relationship between the consumer-worker ratio and the level of income.

The modern version of Chayanovian ideas has been formulated by Shanin in the sahpe of his social mobility schema. We constructed mobility matrices with the help of the past and present landownership information. We did not note a fluid situation as suggested by Shanin. In fact, we found that the majority of today's rich households also originated from rich households of the past. The rich households have persisted long enough to emerge as a class in our study villages.

6. On the contrary, we observed a striking inequality amongst the rural households with regard to the ownership/control of land. The concentration of land in the hands of a few households in both the villages was indeed very significant. The top 10% of the households in village-1 owned 33.91% of total agricultural land in 1951 and they increased their share of the same to 50.28% in 1981. They operated 28.37% of the total land in 1951 and the figure rose to 45.70% in 1981. At the other end of the spectrum, the bottom 60% of households have been consistently losing their shares. Thus they owned 24.48% of agricultural land and operated 29.57% of total operated land in 1951. These figures dropped to 9.93% and 14.71% respectively in 1981. We observed a similar trend of concentration and dispossession in other village too.

7. We observed acute differences between different groups of peasant households in both villages with respect to :

i) Ownership of draught animals.
ii) Farming implements e.g. plough, yoke, spade, pumps etc.
iii) Techniques of production.
iv) Ownership of other assets e.g. houses, radio, trees and different household assets.
v) Pattern of income and expenditure.
vi) Market participation.
vii) Food intake and standard of living.

We observed a clear trend of differentiation between owners and non-owners of the above material elements of production. The extent of differentiation varied from village to village.

8. We have seen from our field work findings that these differences can be explained in terms of the relations of production and exchange. We found that the rich peasants have a stronger command over the surplus generated in the rural economy. They extract this surplus by virtue of their advantageous positions in tenural arrangements, money lending, mortgage and market participation.

9. The rich peasants are also exploiters of others labour. It is because of their increased exploitation that the poorer groups of peasants are being dispossessed and ultimately proletarianised. That

the poor peasantry has been dispossessed and proletarianised became clear from the following :

i) The repossession of operated land by the rich farmers from their tenants.

ii) Growth of wage labour, especially the 'worker novices' (workers for the first time).

iii) Movement from 'bonded' to 'free' labour.

iv) 'Purification' of the wage payment - from kind to cash payment.

The extent of proletarianisation differed from village to village. Landless agricultural workers and marginalised peasants in village-1 appeared to us more proletarianised than in village-2. We noted this by observing the followings :

i) The extent of 'class-in-itself' to 'class-for-itself' changes.

ii) The disintegration of kinship relations and development of class struggle (though partial).

10. We have also examined the role and the nature of the state in differentiating the peasantry. We have seen that the Bangladesh state, through its policy and apparatus, has been aiding the rich peasants in consolidating their economic position. This has strengthened their hand and made the distribution of income and power more unequal amongst different groups of the peasantry.

So our macro evidence and, more important, our micro-level field work findings indicate that the peasantry in Bangladesh conforms more to class differentiation than to the demographic differentiation paradigm. We observed rapid expansion in the forces of production and this, in turn, has intensified the processes of polarisation of the differentiated peasantry. In other words, we witnessed a historically crumbling peasantry.

A conclusion of this nature automatically leads us to the question of transition, in particular to the problematic of the development of capitalism in agriculture. Although this is very important in its own right, an examination of this issue is beyond the scope of this thesis.

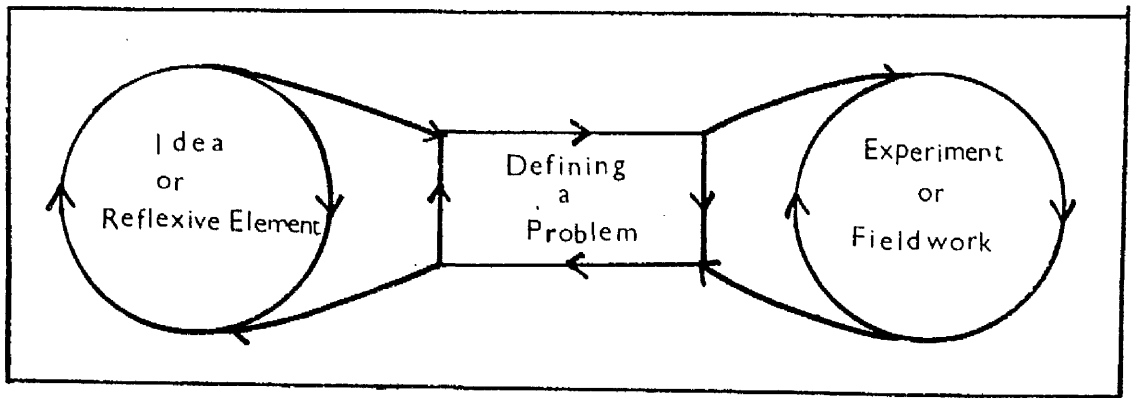
APPENDIX A

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

1. SCOPE AND LIMITATION :

A meaningful social enquiry normally proceeds in three stages of research process - reflexive, developmental and experimental (Phillips, 1976 : 3-17). A social scientist or for that matter any scientist reviews relevant literature to unearth some fundamental assumptions or paradigms (reflexive), defines a problem for investigation (developmental) and proceeds to set up a research situation bearing on the problem (experimental). Again each of those phases is not really neatly compartmentalized. For example, reviewing the literature emphasizes the element of perception, but it is also oriented to certain goals and it is an activity or experiment. Again the definition of a problem is not merely developmental or oriented towards goals : it must also incorporate ideas and it is a kind of action. Also, setting up of a research situation does not preclude ideas and goals. A researcher actually goes through these phases quite often and redefines his strategy of enquiry.

Figure A—1



SCIENTIFIC ENQUIRY AS AN INTERLINKING PROCESS

In more concrete terms, a social enquiry should incorporate atleast the following elements (Lin, 1976 : 1-12 ; Keral, 1976 :1-20 ; Peil 1982 :3-25 : Joshi, 1981) :

I. Identification of the research problem and its relation with the broader theoretical paradigms.

II. Specification of its terms and nature.

III. Operationalization of variables and formulation of hypotheses to be tested with the help of empirical evidence.

IV. Methods of data collection.

V. Analysis of the data and defining their theoretical contribution.

In otherwords, methodological aspects of social research include both the process of theory construction and the use of empirical evidence to test the hypotheses emerging out of the theoretical discourse. It includes all aspects of problem formulation, not simply the technology of data collection. This is because :

> In the absence of a broader perspective of a macro theory of social change, fieldwork (yields) only a bewildering mass of facts and information but no meaningful insights.(Joshi, 1981 : 455)

We have already looked into first three aspects of the above elements in our discussion so far. The present study, as we have indicated, makes an attempt to understand the acute poverty prevailing among the majority and the affluence enjoyed by a few in rural Bangladesh and the evergrowing magnitude of this problem of inequality, with the help of the conceptual tool called differentiation of the peasantry. We have elaborated the theoretical developments of this conceptual apparatus from an historical perspective in chapter - II. We have made an attempt to operationalize the conceptual tools in order to apply them in the context of a third World peasantry in chapter- III. We have also brought out some specific hypotheses for testing them with the help of empirical information collected through fieldwork.

Since we have already dealt quite extensively with the theoretical aspects, especially the problem formulation part of it, we will concentrate more in this appendix on the Fieldwork Experience. But before getting involved with the problems of fieldwork, we should note some of the limitations of this study.

Our study has a number of limitations :

I. We have taken into consideration only the relevant part of the exciting debate on the differentiation of the peasantry in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As a result, we have deliberately left out a number of works by prominent scholars of the time who made valuable contributions to the debate.

II. A detailed discussion of the historical evolution of the mode of production (especially the extent of development of capitalism in the agricultural sector of Bangladesh) would have certainly added strength to our analysis. Although we have covered many empirical indices of that developmental process, we could not get involved in more detailed discussion of its theoretical formulation. We have tried to avoid the danger of operating on too many fronts without doing justice to our main concern - the issue of differentiation of the peasantry. Given the limited space of the thesis, it is not possible to examine all issues bearing on the theme of differentiation of the peasantry. Several issues, which are very important in themselves, have been deliberately left out because of their rather peripheral connection with the context of this thesis.

III. Reality is indeed much more complex than many of our empirical findings would propose. One cannot be perfectly precise while trying to apply any theoretical concept in the empirically selected groups of the peasantry. But we have tried our best to incorporate as many indices as possible to secure correspondence between the theoretical and empirical categories. The lack of congruence, if there be any, has to be treated in this light. So one has to take a 'cautious' approach analysing the complex issue of differentiation of the peasantry.

IV. We have primarily depended on the empirical information collected from two villages of Bangladesh. We realise that we could be more confident in our interpretation of the findings if we could broaden our fieldwork to include a few more villages in different regions of Bangladesh. But we were constrained by time and resources. Nevertheless, insights derived from this limited fieldwork were profound and we could always broaden our horizon by conducting similar fieldwork elsewhere at a later date.

V. There are no "tricks of the trade" of data collection and if someone seeks to look for such an easy option, he will inevitably distort what scientific investigation is all about. We had to discover and rediscover the problems and solutions, over and over through our individual research skill and at times using many innovative techniques. So, much of our field experiences was highly personalized and self-rewarding. If someone looks for a Universal "Crash Method" of data collection, I am afraid he will be disappointed. Many others may not be totally in agreement with our findings and may questition the quantitative precision of our data (Say for example, the percentage of share croppers, which may be estimated in one survey as 20.75 as opposed to 22.50). But to us, it was not only the quantitative findings of the study that were fascinating but the day-to-day difficulties of data collection were equally educative . The observation of intricate social relations, the hard struggle for survival amongst the rural households made our fieldwork more rewarding than the traditional, impersonalised mass production of quantitative information on the peasantry. We too collected hardcore data but only to support the broad social trends which we observed.

2. PHASES OF FIELDWORK :

A methodologically sound social enquiry demands keeping each of the elements we mentioned earlier in phase and in harmony with each other. We tried our best to keep our research process as comprehensive as possible. Our field investigation included the following phases :

a. Phase-I : The very first phase was obviously the stage of formulating my problem of enquiry. The topic of differentiation of the peasantry was suggested to me by my supervisor, Mr. T.J.Byres. Although aware of the problem, I had never thought of taking this dificult and intricate topic for my thesis. But once plunged into the issue, especially the Russian debate on differentiation, I began to find interest and stimulus.

I spent the first nine months of 1980 in a general study of relevant literature and evolving a theoretical basis of my research topic. A thorough look into two wellknown classics (Lenin, 1977a ; Chayanov, 1966) made it easier to pose the issue theoretically. Subsequent review of the literature, especially some of the recent empirical studies conducted in Bangladesh and India, made me aware of the problems of hypothesising the theoretical concepts that I was dealing with and finding out appropriate methods of data collection in order to test those hypotheses.

I came out with a broad outline of the possible aspects of the issue which I planned to investigate empirically and showed it to my supervisor. We had prolonged discussions on the conceptual and empirical problems that would be faced in the field. We finally agreed to prepare the detailed questionnaires once I was familiar with the villages. So I left London for Bangladesh at the end of September, 1980 to conduct the fieldwork.

b. Phase- II : Phase-II of our fieldwork included the selection of the study villages. I started this phase of work sometime in November, 1980. It took about three months to finally decide which villages to study.

With about 85,650 villages (BBS,1981a : 212) and a total population of approximately 90 million (B.B.S, 1981) Bangladesh presents a varied picture of socio-economic conditions[1]. Some villages are peri-urban in nature, some have significantly well developed technology, a few of them are very well served by modern transport, where as others are not easily accessible by any means. Some have highly fertile soil and adequate rainfall, others have less fertility and little rainfall. Some are sparsely populated, others are very densely populated. Some have experienced

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1. Wood (1978) has broadly indicated the nature of these v variations from a historical perspective. See also BARC (1978) Report No. 5.

a high level of Rural Development activities (e.g., the Comilla region with advanced co-operatives and irrigation facilities) and others are simply out of touch with much of development administration (say for example, parts of Rangpur and Dinajpur districts of northern Bengal); while villages in the southern part of the country (e.g. Barisal and Khulna districts) have their peculiar ecological and sociological features because of their coastal location. Char areas have again distinct socio-economic characteristics of their own. It is necessary to pursue field study in each of these regions if one wants to grasp the differing nature of rural change. We have, however, concentrated upon two parts of this variegated whole.

One has to keep in mind this diversity while making the selection of villages for investigation. And this I did before finally selecting my study villages.Before making my final selection, I first studied the district gazeteers (both past and present), relevant government documents, the geographical details available in a variety of books (e.g., Ahmed, 1967 ; various BBS publications etc.), the latest account of each district compiled by Dainik Desh (Special number, 1980), Bichitra (Special Number, 1979,1980), available micro studies (Sources : BIDS, University of Dhaka, University of Chittagong, University Grants Commission, Bureau of Statistics etc). I also had extensive field trips, interviews and discussions throughout the country during this initial phase. Finally I decided to study two villages : Gopinathpur (henceforth village-I) in the district of Jamalpur in Eastern Bengal and Hatshahar (henceforth village-2) in the district of Bogra in Northern Bengal (See map at page) I deliberately left out the Comilla region because a number of studies have already been conducted on it and we are more or less aware of the situation prevailing there (Blair, 1978 : Wood , 1976 ; Stevens, 1976 ; Rahman , 1979 ; Khan ,1979).

Criteria of village selection :

Village-I was selected for the fact that it manifests typical features of the Eastern Bangladesh villages. Situated at a distance of 12 miles from the district headquarters, the village is about two miles off the Dhaka-Jamalpur Highway. One can reach the village either on foot or by rickshaw / bicycle from the Highway. It is located in No. 14 Digpait union of Jamalpur District. On the north and east, it is bounded by the village of Sonatia; on the South by Chandpur and Matarpara ; on the west by Rashidpur. The educational attainment, land-man ratio, landlessness, income-expenditure pattern, productivity etc. in this villa e are almost similar to other villages of Eastern Bengal. The soil is fertile, and more than 50 % of the land is triple cropped. The famine of 1974 hit this area very hard and caused a gc:: deal of land-transfers and panperisation. 17 irrigation =mps (one Deep Tube well and the rest Shallow Tube wells) ha already been setup in this village. The extent of utiliza:n of credit; fertilizer, insecticides is also similar to ny other Eastern Bengal village. There is a market p e (Sonatia Bazar) adjacent to the village. The marketplace h significant impact on the volume of exchange and commodi:.ation of the village products.

Village-II was selected mainly to enable a comparison with the data collected on it by Mukherjee (19=7a) in the early 1940's.This was one of his five interior villages. Detailed information on the socio-economic st:cture of these villages was published by him. Mukherjee noted two small scale Zamindars in this village and that their ancestors had played the pioneering role in forming this village. In the words of Mukherjee :

> (Their (Zamindars) ancestors migrated to this area where they had found a potential site for the profession of priesthoad among the semi-Hinduised Rajbanshis who along with the Muslims are living in this locality for a long time. To establish village properly, the Brahmin landlords also brought a few families of their castes with them, and settled them on land here to form a self-sufficient unit. A periodical

> market; hat, was also arranged to be held twice a week. The village thus gained its importance in the locality. (Mukherjee, 1957a).

The market is still there but the Zamindars have all been forced to abolish their Zamindaris by the Act of 1950 (EBSATA) and there have been tremendous changes in land ownership patterns since then.

Although it is very difficult to make a point to point comparison between Mukherjee's findings and our ones (as the objectives of the two studies did not always coincide and categorizations of the households were often different), We gathered enough information to make this worthwhile.

Hatshahar is , indeed, one of the backward villages of the region. Till recently, there was no direct road to this village, which lies about 30 miles north of Bogra town. It is located in No. 2 Boro tara Union of Khetlal thana in Bogra district. It is about 9 miles east of Joypurhat, the subdivisional headquarters. The village is bounded to the north by Noupara, east by Hatiour, to the south by Khushalpur and Noupara and to the west by village Borotara. In the past, one had to reach Khetlal, the thana headquarter first and then reach the village either on foot or by rickshaw. But now a pacca bus road passes by the village. However, the village is still backward with few or no modern input reaching it. This, in a way, represents the typical characteristics of an underdeveloped North Bengal village. Another reason for selecting this village was that the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) has been conducting an intensive rural study since 1977 by placing permanent investigators in the village. I thought I might make best use of this knowledge and compare my findings with those of the BIDS study.

Moreover, both the villages had the following features which make them representative in somesenses :

I. They are not recently inhabited villages. Thak survey and revenue maps show that they were in existence well before 1856.

II. The villages had proportionate numbers of house holds from all classes as evidenced by the land holding groups.

III. None of the villages was mountainous, coastal, tribal or char in nature.

IV. A number of non-agricultural occupations co-existed with agriculture in both the villages.

V. Village-I was typical in nature of any East Bengal village and village-2 represented the north Bengal villages.

c. Phase-III : Phase III was essentially a preparatory phase for the actual hardcore data collection. This took about two months. I paid several visit to the villages and familiarised myself with most of the household heads. During these reconnaisance tours, I made arrengements for accomodation and other logistic facilities for my investigators. I have known village-I since my childhood as I was born nearby. Although I left my village long ago, I have maintained a close link with the area and visited it quite often. So it was not very difficult for me to form an initial general idea about the socio-economic setting of this village. As for village -2, the BIDS investigators placed in the village guided me in forming a general notion about the village. The findings of the BIDS study and discussions with the BIDS investigators were of special help in shaping my ideas about the village.

I also appointed two local investigators in village -I and one in village-2 during these priliminary tours. These local investigators were educated upto intermediate levels and were virtually unemployed. They were residing in the villages. One of the local investigators in village-2 , Dilip Chakravarti was a primary school teacher . He was well aware of the techniques of data collection as he had been very close to the BIDS study team.

After a few visits, I sat down to formulate the questionnaires and general guidelines for the data collection. It took me a few weeks to prepare the draft questionnaires. Once the draft questionnaires was ready, I circulated it to many of my colleagues at the BIDS who had practical fieldwork experience. I myself had earlier been involved in more than one fieldstudy. We then discussed the practicability of the administration of the questionnaires.

Next we selected two principal investigators for each of the villages from amongst the fresh University Graduates (Economics). The criteria of their selection included some experience of data collection, they were born in rural areas and kept in touch with their villages afterwords. Initially they had to undergo a regorous training at the Institute under my own guidence. This was the preparatory training for fieldwork. They soon became familiar with the conceptual and empirical tools which we were to use in our data collection techniques. After about six weeks training, we took them with us to our study villages to introduce them to the villages. Simultaniously, we also carried out pre-testing of the questionnaires. During this per-testing, we collectively administered the questionnaires taking three households from nine different land-owning groups of the peasantry (categorized according to landholding sizes). The pre-testing helped us to realise the feasibility and efficiency of all operating procedures proposed to be used in our field investigation. This prompted us to remove many unnecessary and doubtful clauses from the questionnaires and thus to improve on instruments of data collection. It allowed us to take a hard look at the variables, hypotheses and theories formulated and used. The pre-testing provided information and insights in regards to the viability and usefulness of these variables, hypotheses and theories. We were thus provided with an opportunity to make a final selection of variables and to consider reformulation or refinement of hypotheses and theories. Ofcourse, these processes of reformulation and refinement continued through out the fieldwork period.

Once back from the field after pre-testing, I sat down with my field notes and restructured the questionnaires and field guidelines incorporating the field responses during pre-testing. We then discussed each item of the questionnaires including possible problems which might crop up when we meet the respondents. After through debate and discussions, we finalized the draft questionnaires. The questionnaires was then printed. The whole exercise took about four weeks. We were ready to start our actual data collection by March, 1981.

d. Phase IV: This phase included the the collection of a mass of concrete data. It continued for about nine months. I was living with each team of investigators alternately. I was also collecting information along with the investigators and observing the households. But the stimulating part of the field tours were the evening sessions with the investigators. After the day's hard work, we would return to our field centre and sit down to discuss the problems we faced while filling up the questionnaires. Each of us had unique experiences and we would exchange our solutions to these problems. Through these discussions we came to a certain consensus about many innovative methods of data collection. I will call these unconventional methods, the guerilla methods of data collection. These methods had no set pattern.

This phase of the fieldwork provided me with exciting stimulas for reconstructing and retailoring my theoretical framework. This reconstruction of theoretical ideas again stimulated me to go for deeper investigation. In a way this was a two-way and mutually reinforcing exercise . In this phase, I became aware of the complexity of social reality and was helped to shed many of the hardline approache which I had learned from text books. Reality taught me to unlearn many of these unrealistic and dogmatic ideas. This also helped me widen my theoretical vision and again convinced me that there was no short-cut in fieldwork.

e. Phase V: In this phase, we processed our data. We first edited each of the questionnaires and organised the data in groups according to landowning sizes. These became our basic reference groups and we then coded our data according to these groups. Whenever possible, we also made other groupings e.g. groups according to operated land, tenural arrangements, income and expenditure patterns etc and compared our results with those of the basic reference groups. The preliminary grouping of the data helped us identify the weakness of our data and accordingly we went back to our villages to collect the missing data. This was our final trip to the study villages. So we checked and cross-checked as much information as possible with our local investigators, selected informants and the household concerned. Once we were back from the field and the quantitative data coded, they were ready for tabulation. This involved counting the numbers of individual items in various categories of households and putting the results into tables. These tables would serve us as the basis

of our analysis that was to follow.The tabulation,in fact, continued throughout the phase of analysis and interpretation of our fieldwork findings.The calculation was done with the help of simple calculating machines.I was always involved in the data processing exercises.This helped me form an overall idea about the state and the quality of my empirical information.The tabulations ranged from simple two variables exercises to complex multi-variable cross-tables.

The whole exercise of data processing was extremely illuminating and I myself could realize the worth of an extensive fieldwork only at this stage of our research process.

Phase VI: This phase included the writing of the thesis and putting data int use.This was the mosteexciting of all the phases.While writing the first draft,I became aware of the diversities from village to village, the relationship of the households with land and nature, their ageold dependence on the community at large, the gradual breaking of that dependence, the emerging patterns of differential classes, the growing interference of the state and the day-to-day struggles of the peasantry. I was aware of these aspects in the cases of individual households,but later the factors could be seen to apply to groups as well—a prelude to the identification of class behaviour.It is at this stage that the processes of differentiation began to emerge more forcefully and clearly.

The first draft gave me a first impression of the issues I was looking at.After finishing the first draft,I went back to my theoretical construct and discussed many of the problems with my supervisor.After receiving his comments I began to realize many of my own limitations as an investigator.

All these limitations and rethinking have been reflected in my final draft.This phase of the study covered well over a year and allowed me enough time to reflect upon many of my earlier overenthusiastic notions on the research problem.

3. METHODS AND PROBLEMS OF DATA COLLECTION:

i) SAMPLING: Our study village-I was too big to be subjected to an overall census.There were more than four hundred households in this village. Although they all belonged to a single village geographically(Mouza), mainly designed for administrative purpose, only about two hundreds of them belonged to a cohesive social village.By social village we meant

the area in which we noticed a homogeneity of social interactions and closer kinship relations.Before demarcating such a social village(which is our village-I) we collected general information related to land,labour, education,population and other community indices for the whole village. Our social village was found to tally with almost all the general characteristics of the whole village.So sampling did not obscure many of the peculiarities of this village.The 200 households which we identified as those belonging to village-I hardly go beyond its boundary for any social activity(e.g. salish,marriage,akika,faita/sradh etc).

In the case of village-2, however, we took the full census. There were only 121 households and we collected all categories of information for each of these households.

ii) INTERVIEWING: Interviewing the respondents with a set of questionnaire was the most common method of collecting quantitative data.There were one-spot surveys on some aspects of the information(say, for example, family size, age, landownership,assetownership etc.) and also Cost-Route methods of regular and frequent visits to the same sample households for collecting information on aspects like buying and selling of products, production patterns, use of hired labour etc. The questinnaires were arranged accordingly.

iii) THE OBSERVATION: Besides noting down the quantitative information through the usual interviewing methods, we made use of the observation methods[2]. We were keeping an eye on some selected households and witnessing the changes experienced by them during our study period. The selected informants and the local investigators were of great help in this method of data collection. We were also witnessing the important events in the villages and their effects on individual households. This method of observation has allowed us to test the qualitative hypotheses that we have drawn from our quantitative information.

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2 Observation is a method of data collection in which the researcher or his collaborators record information as they witness events during the s study period (Lin, 1976:205).

iv) THE NATURE OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES: As the nature of the research problem demanded, we had indeed very lengthy questionnaires.But we made no attempt to fill the questionnaires at any time. To facilitate the flexibility in the data collection, we divided the questionnaires into a number of sub-divisions. We started with the questions on general demographic information— the name of the household, sex and age of the family members, their occupations etc. We then went for more specific information e.g. ownership and use of land and its associated features—tenural arrangements, mortgage, buying and selling of land; other resources—housing, farm implements, draught animals, water bodies; nature of technology;production; income/expenditure patterns; utilization of surplus; indebtedness and money lending; market participation; introduction of modern inputs; intervention of the state in the rural development activities; the local power structure and institutional framework; use of wage labour; the emergence of class consciousness and the extent of proletarianisation amongst the impoverished peasantry etc. (Please see the synopsis of the questionnaires in Appendix B. The original questionnaires was in Bengali).

Our first attempt was to collect as much information as possible on land-ownership and land-utilization from each of the of the households. We then formed nine groups of households (dividing them according to different landsize) and collected other information keeping in mind these basic reference groups. We attached so much importance to the land-ownership pattern because of the fact that given the present state of agricultural development and agrarian relations, the size of landholding was still considered a rough proxy of class status (Byres,1977: 265-8) in the context of rural Bangladesh. However,whenever our theoretical construct demanded,we formed other reference groups and collected information accordingly. Thus we formed separate reference groups based on such factors as number of draught animals owned, the number and nature of housing, the tenural arrangements, the wage earning capacity, the levels of income, occupations etc. Thus when we wanted to see the extent of the exploitation of labour, we went straight to see the utilization of labour and concentrated on groups like wage labourers, share-croppers, the rentier-farmers etc.

We noticed considerable diversity even within such special groups. Thus, a wage labourer with no land in his possession exhibited quite different attitude from another wage labourer who owned some land. A share-cropper with better agricultural implements behaved quite differently from another share-cropper who was poorly endowed with such implements.

We never tried to fill in any of the questionnaires in one sitting. We took each of the sub-sections part by part and allowed sufficient time in between. The respondent's timing and place were considered final.

Most of the information revealed by the respondents was not written down infront of them, particularly on sensitive subjects, like the land. This was put in the questionnaireconcerned immediately after returning to the field centre. The investigators were instructed to put their comments in the margin of the sheets about the reliability and typicality of their data.

Some of the questions were deliberately framed in a way so that they enabled the investigators to ask the right question at the right moment. For example, the question on total land owned by a household was immediately followed by the question on utilization of land— how much of it the respondent cultivated himself and how much of it was rented out, when did he buy this land or how did he acquire it. Questions related to the production of crops on individual land plots were asked simultaneously. All these allowed us to estimate the approximate size his landholding.If he gave us wrong information at one stage, the discrepancy would surely be identified at a later stage and was corrected. Again, for example, the question on income accruing to a household was broken down into several parts:

i) Income from agriculture including the value of output of each crop produced, poultry and livestock items.

ii) Income from renting out of land, farm equipments,draught animals, houses, boats etc.

iii) Income from money lending, mortgaging out, forward sales etc.

iv) Income from other occupations e.g. hiring out as wage labourers, trading, fishing, priesthood, services etc.

v) Incomes from other peripheral activities such as salish, dalali, writing application and documents for others, dowry, helping others in bribing government officials, holding positions in the rural works programme committees, local bazar committees etc.

We first collected data on the last week's income of the household and then gradually extended the information for the whole month. Ques Question on income in lumpsum for some special acivities was also asked specifically.We collected similarly the corresponding information on the expenditure pattern of all the households.

While collecting information on items like land, assets, farm implements etc. we always kept in mind the dynamic nature(flow) of these aspects of rural economy.

In each case, we probed quite deeply to get the accurate information. Thus, whenever we found the information incomplete, vague, irrelevant, inconsistent or inadequate, we went back again and again and helped the respondents recollect their information. This probing also helped us establish better communication with the respondents. But we had to be very tactful in this method of probing. We asked anybody we thought relevant to correct our information. In many cases, we solicited information from the past/present servants of some households whose heads deliberately avoided giving the correct information.

In some circumstances, many household heads would not simply admit their ignorance of the particular subject we were talking about. They would give us wrong answers. In such cases, we had to invent certain plausible answers and give a lead to follow up these answers. A supplementary question, asking for elaboration often helped many respondents come back to the point quickly.

We faced a number of problems while collecting information, to which we had to find instant solutions. The problem that hurt us most was our resource constaint. A study of this magnitude, spread over so long a time, usually demands huge resources——both monetary and manpower. We had a limited amount of money and a limited number of investigators. I, therefore, relied heavily on the local investigators residing in and around our study villages.They demanded less money and collected excellent information. The only problem with them was that they were not trained. But once thoroughly trained, they were our best sources of information.

Familiarity with the villages also helped us a great deal. I was more or less known to every member of village-I. Everyone co-operated wholeheartedly. Moreover, mine was the first such research project conducted in this village. So we received the best possible co-operation. The problem was not very severe in Village-2 either. We had two local advantages here. The village had been under similar study by the BIDS for quite some years and each of the households appreciated the objectives of such research. And our local investigator Dilip Chakravarti, was highly skilled and tactful in collecting information. Excepting one or two households, all villagers knew Dilip and we could easily penetrate

into almost all of the households. We, however, faced some kind of non-cooperation from one or two rich households, mainly because of their distaste for some of the earlier activities of the BIDS investigators. A few,overenthusiastic BIDS investigators had tried to organise the landless peasants to press for higher wages and rental shares from the rich peasants. This had made the landowners slightly worried. We ,however, could collect our information through the help of our local informants and investigator. The BIDS records collected earlier also helped.

In both the villages, we made it absolutely clear to the villagers that our sole aim was to collect objective information and not to get mixed up in local conflicts. We kept urselves neutral in the face of any factional quarrel and showed respect for their local socio-cultural milieu.

If any misunderstanding arose between any of our investigators and a local villager, we quickly settled it. We generally showed a low profile and did nothing to offend the villagers. We never became involved in any financial transaction with our respondents. We communicated with the rural rich only to get information and never took food in any of the households even after repeated insistence. The co-operation of local government officials, Bank officials, Tahsildars (local revenue collector), was also sought from time to time to solve the problems of the village as a whole. All of this created confidence among the villagers about our trustworthiness.

From the very beginning, we made two things clear. Firstly, we categorically explained to the villagers that we had nothing to do with government. Secondly, we did not come to their village to distribute reliefs on behalf of any voluntary agency . We explained that we came to their village only for research purpose. My association with the country's premier research organisation,BIDS, helped me a great deal in overcoming some of the suspicions of our respondents and in convincing them on this point. This was necessary to ensure that no sections of the villagers either overstated or understated the facts which we were trying to gather. Even after all this we noticed some tendencies in the poorer sections to overstate their current miseries(perhaps for relief purpose), and understate their present resources while overstating their past resources. For example, some of the richer peasants conceealed their resource position, especially the land information inferring, not unreasonably,

that the Government may be seeking information (in disguise) for purposes of taxation, crop-levy or the imposition of a new lower ceiling on land. Question on tenural status might have led some share-croppers to the inference that Government may be interested in the issue of share-croppers right. But the landlors might have thought the Government was thinking to launch a programme of land reform which would affect them adversely. Moreover, the large scale emigration of Hindu landowners has left land in defacto control of many with doubtful title and they were particularly sensitive to any question on landholding.

We, however, tried our best to make them understand that information supplied by them would be kept secret and would only be used for research purposes. After some of these initial setbacks, we, ofcourse, could get back the confidence of the respondents.The more we became familiar with their way of living, the more access we got into their household information. If we were denied cooperation we went back to them again and again. Our local investigators helped us a lot in breaking the communication barrier and thus made us familiar to the rural households.

We at times offered our respondents some light refreshments - such as cigarettes, biri, pan and biscuits to their children during our introductory sessions.

After collecting the general information we went to collect specialised information - as for example the nature of labour exploitation, the level of proletarianisation, the extent of kinship bondages etc. For this purpose, we formed a small and informal group of households with similar socio-economic interests (e.g. the wage labourers, share-croppers, the rentier-farmers etc). We introduced topics of general interests to each of these groups and encourage them to become involved in discussing problems in which we were interested. We usually organised these group discussions late at night. While on their own, they usually opened up and talked about many issues with a high level of commonsense and understanding. It was after these group discussions that we realized how naive it would have been to assume that the peasants were a group of ignorant, unthinking people. They knew their own problems relating to land, food,

cows, credit etc. much better than many of the 'well acclaimed' rural experts. We also had an opportunity to cross-check some of the information collected earlier through these group discussions. As for other ways of cross-checking, we relied on the inherent checks and balances set in the questionnaire itself. Take for example, the land information. A household was supposed to give us land information on atleast three occassions. They first gave us the total land they owned and operated. Then they gave information of land crop by crop, season by season. Again they furnished land information while giving buying/selling, lease of land information. So, whenever, we noticed discripancy, we referred back to that particular questions and ascertained the correct data. Also information on a related aspect of certain variable helped us get a rough guide as to the reliability of our information. Thus an abnormal result on cropping intensity (say, more than three times higher than the average figure of the village) signalled us to go back to their land information for the household concerned for re-checking.

Similarly, any rough foodgrain balance encompassing the stock at the beginning of our study period and the movement of the stock through sale/purcahse/consumption determined any discrepancy in the food information and hence the acrerage information.

Again, a check of the large investment and other expenditure against the income, credit/loans during the study period helped us to remove any discrepancy in the cash balances. Inconsistent returns were reinvestigated. We finally allowed about 10% inconsistency errors. One way to improve the field investigation was to discuss the problems we faced while collecting information amongst ourselves during our night sessions of exchange of experience. A collective wisdom did certainly emerge to help solve some of the intricate field problems.

But the biggest problem we faced was during the collection of past information. Since we were working on the question of differentiation of the peasantry we had to get some dynamic view of the situation. We were to locate the underlying changes of important economic indicators faced by individual households. But certainly, a household of 1981 was not always the household of 1951. Indeed, a household of 1951 would have split into three households by 1981. So how could we analyse the past? We had to reconstruct the recent history of the village by recall method and get these information checked and cross-checked by the knowledgeable

village elders with a high sense of integrity and objectivity. The cross-examination at times was carried on with a single respondent, at other times in a group, depending on the type of information we are looking for. To secure past data, we first identified certain cut-off periods — certain years which were strongly imprinted in the minds of the elderly household heads because of local/national happenigs. In case of our study villages, we chose 1951, 1972 and, of course, the year in which we conducted our study (1981). 1951 was chosen becuase a year before that, the East Bengal State Acquistion and Tenancy Act (EBSATA) was passed. This Act, the major one concerning the landholding and tenancy situation influenced most rural households. The Act made the nominal owners of land (raiyats) the real landowners (Maliks). Moreover, Pakistan was created only about two years before this enactment and the creation of Pakistan was followed by a big communal riot. All these historical events made people remember their conditions, especially their landownership position around that period. Even if the household head in question was comparatively young, he must have heard from his parents/other relatives about the actual land size of their ancestors. Again, 1972 was the year after the 1971 War of Liberation. Most people could, somehow, reconstruct their socio-economic positions around that time.

We first asked a household head, the name of the household head in 1951. We then asked if he knew the landholding size of his father/grand father (or anyone who was household head of his ancestral household around that time). We then checked the information with other elderly neighbours/relatives. We took similar information for each of the households. On each occasion we cross-checked the land informations from different sources available locally. We then collected together in one bundle the household sheets bearing similar names. That bundle then became household for 1951. We made similar compilation for 1972. Since we recorded names on each occasion, we could easily identify which of the household actually disintegrated or integrated or just disappeared during the period 1951 - 1981.

Once we had established the past household , we then investigated the key economic information for that year from eldest member of the household supported by others. We also had this information rechecked with the help of elderly relatives/neighbours. To confirm some of this

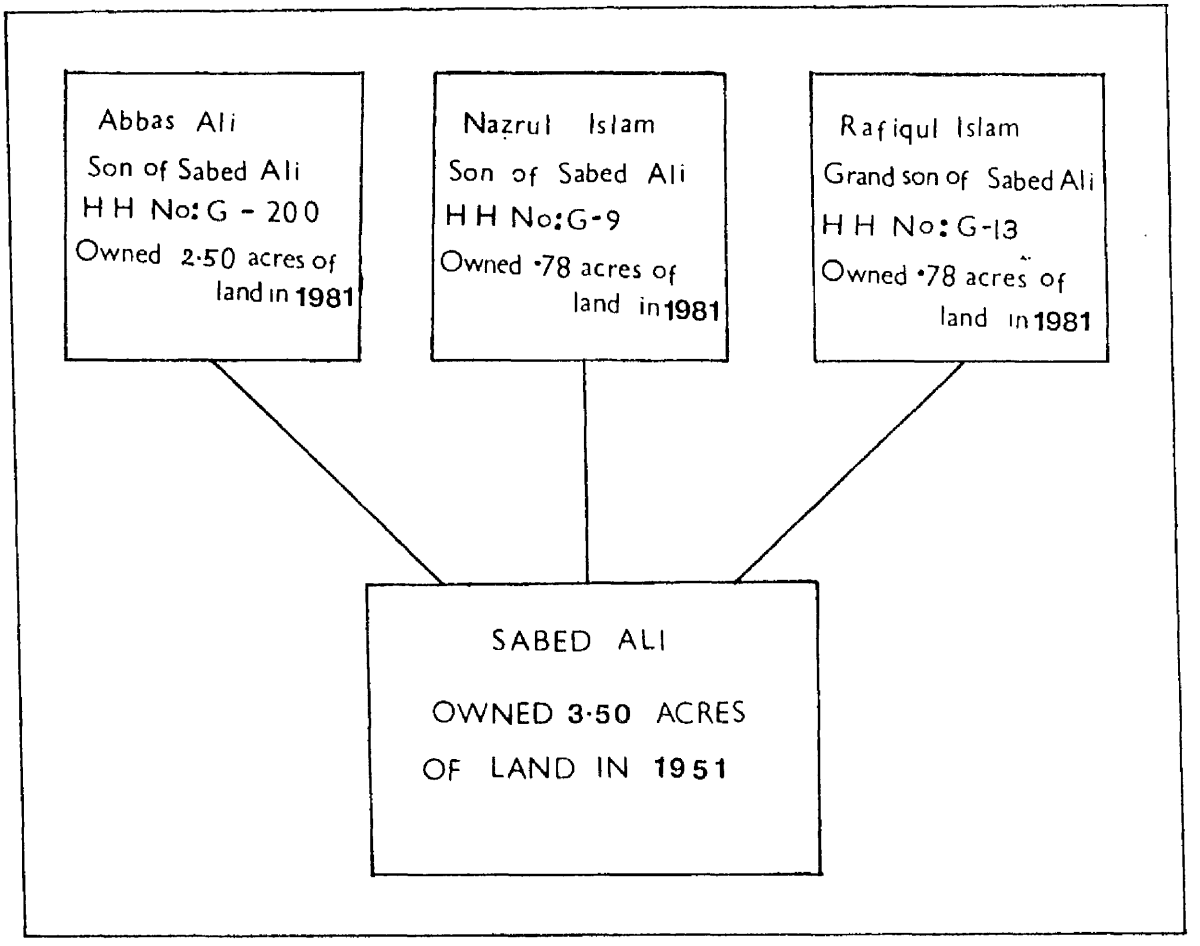
information, we investigated the possible land transaction records at the local Registry Office. But many times we ended up with confusing land information as the clever rich peasants had some of their land registered in benami (pseudonym) to avoid the land reform legislation. Anyway, we atleast got an approximate idea of the land situation prevailing in the past. We checked our information with other historical studies (e.g. Mukherjee, 1957a, 1957b; Abdullah, 1976) to see if our data were at variance.

To take concrete examples, Abbas Ali (Household No. G 200) reported that his father Sabed Ali was the head of their household in 1951 and owned 3.5 acres of land. Sabed Ali was also the head of the household in 1972 and owned 3.7 acres of land. But by 1981,Sabed Ali had died and his old household had spilt into three separated households. Abbas Ali had 2.50 acres of land by 1981. His younger brother Nazrul Islam (Household No. G 9) now owning .78 acres of land also reported that his father was the head of the household and owned 3.5 acres in 1951. Again, the nephew of the above two, Rafiqul Islam (Household No. G 13) told us that his grand father was the head of the household in 1951. And he too said that his grand father owned 3.5 acres of land. Rafiqul Islam owned .78 acres of land in 1981. Based on this information, we could safely say that G 200, G 9 and G 13 comprised one household in 1951. And that that household owned 3.5 acres of land.

Compiling this information supplied by three separate households we could identify the original household of Sabed Ali and its land holding situation in 1951. Abbas Ali apparently had more land than other two hoseholds. He must have taken back some of the land from the other two. We can summarise the whole situation in diagrametic form as well (see figure A-2).

Similarly, Ibrahim Ali (Household No. G163), Rustom Ali (Household No. G 20), Hazrat Ali (House No. G 28 and Taher Ali (Household Number G193) revealed that they all belonged to the same household in 1951 headed by Sukur Mahmud and owned 4.52 acres of land. The past information collected in the above way helped us in testing many hyptheses regarding the changes in the social dynamics. We could thus construct a social mobility matrix to

Figure A–2


Abbas Ali
Son of Sabed Ali
H H No: G - 200
Owned 2·50 acres of land in 1981
Nazrul Islam
Son of Sabed Ali
H H No: G-9
Owned ·78 acres of land in 1981
Rafiqul Islam
Grand son of Sabed Ali
H H No: G-13
Owned ·78 acres of land in 1981
SABED ALI
OWNED 3·50 ACRES
OF LAND IN 1951

test the hypotheses of Shanin (1972) regarding the socalled social mobility trends amongst the peasantry (see chapter V).

New Terminology :

While considering the field study we felt the inadequacies of many conventional empirical terms and we therefore re formulated them to make them applicable in the context of our study villages.

i) Thus we felt that information on the ownership of land alone did not really give us the total picture. Even the operated land could not explain the income status of a household. So we formulated a new term — the effective land size equivalent to net operated landholding as follows :

Effective land size = Owned cultivated land + $\frac{1}{2}$ (shared in - shared out) land + (land leased in under fixed rent - land leased out under fixed rent).

Effective landsize roughly corresponded with the agricultural income as it explained the net command over operated land.

ii) We have seen in our study areas that a boy attaining the age of 10 begins participate in full time in agricultural activities. And an old man continues work full time till he dies. So, we have taken (11 - 64) years) as the working age of rural people. This differs from the international standards (see Census, 1981 and other BBs documents).

iii) We have calculated consumer-worker (C/W) ratio as follows :

a. Consumers = All adult males and females (above 10 years) + $\frac{1}{2}$ children (below 10 years)

b) Workers = All working males (11-64 years) - student.

C/W Ratio = i/ii.

iv) We also improvised many of the academic terms currently in use keeping in the conformity with the local situation and dialect.

Finally, I felt that my fieldwork gave me the kind of insights about peasantry which could never be possible through any secondary literature survey. My understanding of the peasantry was never the same after my fieldwork. The excitements which I shared

with fellow investigators will influence my thought processes in years to come. The preceding chapters bring into focus some of those excitements and despair.

APPENDIX B

A SYNOPSIS OF SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Community Servey Questionnaire :

This was the first questionnaire to be administered. It was designed to collect data on the general setting of the village. The information collected included mostly the aggregate data (e.g.,total number of household, total population, total amount of land, total number of pumps, ponds, khas land etc.) and also data of a general nature (e.g., the interlinkages of the village with the surrounding villages, nearby towns and market places, the nature of the power-structure and social events). Information was collected with an historical perspective, so that the general nature of the changes in each of these variables could be understood. While collecting the community information, we normally sat with a large number of people, mostly elderly ones, so that the accuracy of the data could be immediately cross-examined.

2. Preliminary Household Questionnaire :

This was administered on the household heads (or seniormost member of the household in the absence of the household head). This questionnaire consisted of questions on family structure, family labour, wage labour, education level, ownership and use of land and other assets,occupations (primary and secondary), housing, asset-transactions, migration, share-cropping, mortgages, moneylending, indebtedness etc. In each case, we asked for information on certain periods (remembered for their historical importance due to local or national events, e.g., war of liberation in 1971, Land Reform Act of 1950 and riots in and around early 1950s.). We concentrated on the family history and land size in these cut-off periods. The preliminary questionnaire was followed by detailed questionnaires on important items like income-expenditure, land, sharecropping, production, wage labour, state involvement , etc.

3. Income-Expenditure Pattern :

Questionnaire on income was divided in four parts :

a. Agricultural income.

b. Rental income.

c. Income from other occupationes.

d. Others.

That on expenditure, likewise, contained as many as twenty items starting with food and other consumption needs to expenditure on litigation.

4. Land Information :

This part of the questionnaire may be summerised as follows :

PARTICULARS	AREA (ACRES) IN CUT-OFF PERIODS		
	1951	1972	1981
1. Owned land			
2. Rented in land			
3. Mortgagedin land			
4. Total area (1 + 2 + 3)			
5. Rented out area			
6. Mortgaged out area			
7. Total (5 + 6)			
8. Operational land (4 - 7)			
9. Effective land (9 after rental adjustments)			
10.Area sown more than once			
11.Gross cropped area			
12.Irrigated area			
13.Gross irrigated area			

The above was followed by land sale / purchase information, again from an historical perspective.

5. Share-cropping :

Information on share-cropping included not only the amount of land involed but also terms and conditions of share-cropping, advantages and disadvantages of various types of share systems.

6. Production :

Production of crops was calculated seasonwise on different types of land e.g., own land and others'land, irrigated land, non-irrigaged land ,etc. The production figures were taken both in kind and money terms.

7. Mortgage and Money lending :

The general questionnaire on the extent of mortgage in and out of land was followed by a close look into individual cases through participant obsevation. Information on money lending was collected from both debtors and creditors.

8. Wage labour :

Questions on the growth in wage labour, the extent of wage variations the seasonality of the wage employment,mode of wage payment and the extent of'bondage'/ mobility amongst the wage labourers constituted this part of the questionnaire.

9. Introduction of Modern Inputs and the Involvement of the State :

Questionnaire on modern inputs included the extent of use of fertilizer, insecticides, HYV seeds, modern irrigation pumps, institutional credit, etc. Information was collected for 1981 and 1972. Questions on state included involvement of household with various institutions like police, judiciary, local government, co-operatives, banks, etc.,the benefits received from such institutions, the extent of exploitation by the local leaders and agents of state machine and the nature of the implementation of various policies of the government.

10. Attitude of the People :

This part of the questionnaire included essentially the qualitative questions e.g., the nature of their perception about exploitation by dominant groups, the repression by the state, the extent of the development of class-consiousness and rural 'proletarianisation' etc.

The questionnaires,alongwith codes, ran into no less than 150 pages. They were prepared in Bengali in order to make them easily perceptible to both investigators and respondents.

APPENDIX C

CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS AMONGST AGRICULTURAL WAGE LABOURERS

Class-consciousness amongst agricultural labourers is an important element of the phenomenon of rural-proletarianisation. This relates to agricultural wage labourers/poor pesants being able to comprehend their own economic interests as a class and relate the causes of their improverishment to the overall structure of the society in which they live.

Throughout our field study, we kept an eye on the agricultural wage labourer households to see whether they behave as a distinct class or not. While the level of consciousness amongst agricultural labourers varied from village to village and from group to group (according to the level of land ownership, control over operated land, level of indebtedness etc.), we found that this consciousness as a whole was growing. The political turmoils which the villages had to share since the war of liberation of 1971 and greater intrusion of mass communication system in the form of radio, newspapers, television, etc. in the villages have created more awareness amongst the villagers as a whole. Whether that higher level of awakening has been precipitating into class-consciousness or not is very difficult to interpret.

It is certainly true that the level of general consciousness was much less in village -2 than in village-1. Even than, the poorer peasantry showed enough potentiality to rise as a class in the face of acute class-exploitation by the dominant groups. Ofcourse, the level of that consciousness was at times blurred by factionalism and kinship. But whenever some one explained to them the exploitative relations in which they were involved, they could easily comprehend that. There has hardly been any organisational attempt to arouse the exploited peasantry for better wage and share of tenancy in village-2. [1]

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[1] In villages (in Rangpur District) not far from this, when the Kisan Sabha, an organisational wing of Indian Communist Party, tried to organise the share-cropping poorer peasantry to agitate for higher shares in the 1940s, they rose to the occasion and made history. The revolt was called the Tebagha Movement. (See Sen, S, 1972).

BIDS research investigators based in this village made an experimental attempt to organise the landless labourers of this village. They came very late in the night and discussed their plight with the research them. They formed a committee and began to press for higher wages and share rentals. But the village rich led by one RM became suspicious about the whole thing and began to intimidate those who were participating in the organisational activities.

As long as BIDS investigators were in that village, they successfully resisted such threats. But as soon as they left, or posed to be more neutral for the sake of research activities, the rural poor lost their confidence and began to be involved in factional politics again foregoing their class activities to save their skin. Those who still retained vigour were harassed by the richer peasantry in the name of theft and sexual corruptions. Ultimately, the organisation they started for themselves crumbled. Though nipped in the bud, that they got together and formed an organisation was sufficient indication that if properly guided they could rise to the ocassion. Those who had no/or very little owned land were more sincerely involved in that short lived organisation than others.

But the situation was quite different in village-1. The agricultural labourers, especially with no or very little owned land (say, less than .50 acres) were more defiant and formed militant groups identifying themselves as completely different from other folk. They valued very little traditional family ties and became quite sceptical about the 'community security' system. When asked to identify their social distinction from others we were told the following by them:

1. Most of the poorest agricultural labourers said that the richer households (even if they were related) did not bother to associate themselves with them in social gatherings like marriage, Sradh/Chehlum, etc. They were not invited on such ocassions.

2. Most richer households did not distribute the Kurbani[2] meat/beef to the poorer neighbours or relations these days. They confined them to richer relations or neighbours.

3. In Salish, the richer households were invariably against the poorer peasantry irrespective of the merit of the case.

4. The local government leaders favoured their richer relations/ neighbours while distributing the government's development resources.

All of these and many other realizations amongst landless labourers point to consciousness amongst them. In village-I, we found landless wage labourers very often discussing amongst themselves possible wage rates for the ensuing seasons and coming to a broad agreement about the rates. Most of them tried to implement this unofficial consensus. If someone took a lower rate, he had to explain to others the circumstances in which he had to accept that.

They would never discuss these problems in the presence of a representative of rich landowners. They would better wait till late at night to thrash out these problems. We tested this differential attitude. In the day-time when asked about their own situation and the relationship with the landowners they gave us quite a compromising answer. But at the dead of the night, free from the fear of the rich peasants, they gave us a completely different picture.

We received complaints from the landowners of village 1 that these days agricultural labourers have become 'overlords'. They did not like to have panta (the watered rice left over of the night before) and demanded fresh rice. Some of them even took their newly acquired modern

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[2]Religious festival of Muslims during which they sacrifice cows/ goats etc in the name of Allah.

wealth 'radios', to the fields to "show off" their 'defiance' and pride. In a nut shell, we found the agricultural labourers in village-1 more independent and conscious. The growth in the demand for higher labour in the wake of a higher number of power pumps and greater cropping intensities and also the presence of a market place adjacent to the villages, facilitated the growth of such consciousness. The level of consciousness was certainly less in those who had a greater amount of land.

But one should not over-estimate the growth of this consciousness. The consciousness though present at an individual level, did not as yet lead to collective action. There was no indication of the formation of a trade union for agricultural labourers in any of our study villages.[3]

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[3]However in some villages, agricultural labourers have formed such trade unions with direct organisationa support from left wing political parties in a number of districts, say, Khulna, Jessore, Jamalpur, Mymensingh,Comilla, Noakhali etc. (Selim, 1980).

APPENDIX D

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND LOCAL TERMS

ALH : Agricultural Labourer Household.

AWL : Agricultural Wage Labourer.

Aratdar : Stockist

Abvab : Illegal exactions.

Aman : a) Broad Cast - deep water variety of Paddy, highly photo-sensitive, sown from February to April on land usually flooded from 1 to 3 metres deep, harvested in October-Decemb er.

b) Transplant : Transplanted on puddled land from July to September and harvested from November to early January (Major Aman variety).

Akika : Muslim equivalent of christening.

Aush : Early monsoon crop harvested in July and August. Either broadcast or transplanted.

Bargadar : Share-croppers

Biri : Indigeneous igarettes.

Boro : Transplanted from December to February and harvested from late March to end of June.

Bhar : Sling to carry buskets/weights.

BADC : Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation

BBS : Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics

BWDB : Bangladesh Water Development Board

BARC : Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council

BARD : Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development

BIDS : Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies

Bichitra : Weekly Newspaper.

Bepari : Merchant.

Bazar : Daily Market.

Baithak Khana : Seating Room

Comilla Model : Co-operative model of rural development ioneered in the district of Comilla since 1960s.

CO (Dev) : Circle Officer (Development) - highest level executive officer at Thana.

C.I. Sheet: Corrogated Iron Sheet(Generally known as 'Tin Sheet'in Bangladesh).

CO (Rev) : Circle Officer (Revenue) - ighest level evenue fficer at Thana.

Char : Accreted land from river.

C/W Ratio : Consumer/Worker Ratio.

Chaprashi : Orderly/bearer.

CSS : Centre for Social Studies, University of Dhaka

Chehlum : Commemorative feast to mark death (Muslim).

Dainik Desh : Daily Newspaper (Bengali)

Dalal : To work as a broker/intermediary

Dhani Chashi/Dhani Grihastha : Rich farmer.

Dophar : Wooden platform attached to the plough.

Dao : Chopper

Donga/Hossa : Water Scoop

Daroga : Police Inspector

Debottar : Hindu religious endowment.

Daisudi : Credit arrangment under which the tenant gives a loan to the landowner against a mortgage of land which he can cultivate untill the loan is repaid.

District : Administrative unit above the subdivision

Division : Administrative unit above the district

DCR : Development of Capitalism in Russia (Lenin, 1977a)

DTW : Deep Tube Well

EBSATA : East Bengal State Acquisition & Tenancy Act, 1950.

E-Criterion : Exploitation Criterion.

EPW : Economic and Political Weekly.

Fala/Fal : Pointed iron sheet placed over the wooden platform (dophar) of the plough.

FFYP : First Five Year Plan

Faria : Itenerant trader.

FY : Financial Year

Feri Ghat : Launch/Steamer/Boat terminal at the river bank.

G = Prefix G indicates a household from study village-2 (Gopinathpur)

GOBD : Government of Bangladesh

GOB : Government of Bengal

GOEP : Government of East Pakistan

GOP : Government of Pakistan

Gs/O : Grand Son of

Gram Sarker : Village government (literally).

Gram Sarker Prodhan : Chief of Village government.

Gomosta : Employee of Zamindars

Guerilla method of data collection : Unconventional method of data collection.

H = Prefex H indicates household from study village-2 (Hatshahar)

HDC : How to Differentiate Classes.

HYV : High Yielding Vareity.

HH : Household.

Haoladar/Gatnidar/Taluqdar : Quasi landlords

IRDP : Integrated Rural Development Programme.

ILO : International labour office.

Jotedar : Stratum next to landlords and quasi landlords.

Khaikalashi : Tenancy arrangement in which the tenant pays rent in advance to the landowner and enjoys the rights of cultivation of the land for certain specified years.

Koolee : Labour who carries weight

Krishak : Farmar

Krishi Bank : Agricultural Bank.

Kishan : Agricultural labourer

Kishan Sobha : 'Agricultural Labourers Association' - frontal organisation of Communist Party of India.

Khas land : Government land.

Kulaks : The rich Peasants.

Kherer Pala : Pile of fodder.

Khurpi : Small spade used to weed grasses.

Kaste : Sickle.

Kural : Axe.

Kurbani : Muslim festival to sacrifice animals.

LLHH : Landless Households.

Md : Maund - Unit of weight = 1/27 of a Ton.

Matbar : Faction leader.

Moi : Leveller

Mir : Co-operatives - Council of elders who exercised the responsibilities of Obshchina in Russia.

Malik : Landlowners.

MESW : Marx and Engels selected works.

MECW : Marx and Engels collected works.

MHH : Middle Households (Middle Peasants).

Mouza : Demarcated territorial unit designated as a mouza having separate jurisdictions list number (JL No.) A mouza may include more than one village.

NEP : New Economic Policy.

Naib : Rent collector

Nankar : 'Corvee'

Nazrana : Compulsory cash present demanded by landlords from peasants before renting out land to them. Also means 'bribe' to Govt. officials.

Nangla : Harrow

OC : Officer in Charge (Head of the Police Station)

Obshchina : Unit responsible to the landlord for peasant rent payments and/or for the organisations of peasant work on the land of landlord prior to abolition of serfdom in Russia).

Pan : Betel leaf.

PIDE : Pakistan Institute of Development Economics.

PDT : Preliminary Draft Thesis.

Pucca : Brick laid.

Panta : Watered rice, left over the night before.

Raiyat : Tenant.

Rooti : Course flour (Baked)

SFYP : Second Five Year Plan.

Salami : Non-refundable lumpsum payable by a leasee before taking possession.

Sudkhor : One who lives on usury interest (literally) - Money lender.

Salish : Dispute adjudication.

Sepoy : Ordinary Police.

S/o : Son of

Sardar : Leader

Sradh : Commemorative feast to mark death (Hindu).

Tebhaga . : Three shares, literally.

Thana : Administrative unit above union

TCCA : Thana Central Cooperative Association.

Tahsil : Basic Revenue Collection Unit.

Tahsilder : Revenue Collector at Tahsil level.

Tk : Unit of currencies equivalent to 2.5 pence.

TYP : Two Year Plan.

UP : Union Parishad.

Uchu bangsha : High family status.

Union : Basic administrative unit.

Waqful Lillah : Muslim religious endowment devoted to public welfair.

Zamindar : Landlord created by Permanent Settlement of 1793.

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